

MODERN
AGRICULTURE;
OR, THE
PRESENT STATE OF HUSBANDRY
IN
GREAT BRITAIN.

INCLUDING
AN ACCOUNT OF
THE BEST MODES OF CULTIVATION PRACTISED
THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND;
THE OBSTACLES TO FARTHER IMPROVEMENTS;
AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE MAY BE MOST
EFFECTUALLY REMOVED.

BY JAMES DONALDSON, DUNDEE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

A simple scene! Yet hence Britannia sees
Her solid grandeur rise; hence she commands
Th' exalted stores of every brighter clime,
The treasures of the sun without his rage:
Hence, fervent all, with culture, toil, and arts,
Wide glows her land: her dreadful thunder hence
Rides o'er the waves sublime, and now, even now,
Impending hangs o'er Gallia's humbled coast;
Hence rules the circling deep, and awes the world.

THOMSON.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY JOHN BROWN.

1796.

MODERN
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THE BEST MODES OF CULTIVATION EMPLOYED
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 THE CONTRIVANCES TO FACILITATE IMPROVEMENT;
 AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THERE MAY BE MOST
 EFFICIENTLY OBTAINED.

BY JAMES DOUGLASS DUNBAR
 IN FOUR VOLUMES
 VOL. IV.





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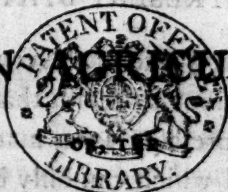
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ERRATA.

- Vol. I. p. 33. l. 21. *dele with*.
- II. p. 32. l. 27. for *breath*, read *breaths*.
 p. 98. l. 14. for *made*, read *moved*.
 p. 212. l. 17. for *burnings*, read *linings*.
 p. 409. l. 19. in some copies for *colour*, read *labour*.
- III. p. 8. l. 10. for *clear*, read *clean*.
 p. 81. l. 20. after *and*, add *on each acre*.
 p. 90. l. 6. for *ill-constructed*, read *ill-conducted*.
 p. 149. l. 30. for *Kyler*, read *Kyloc*.
 p. 153. l. 6. for *quality*, read *quantity*.
 p. 154. l. 22. for *of*, read *on*.
 p. 156. l. 6. for *curls*, read *turls*.
 p. 157. l. 7. for *breeding*, read *fattening*.
- IV. p. 44. l. 7. for *Hamptonshire*, read *Hampshire*.
 p. 65. l. 7. in place of “the intended new ridges are cut across the field, and new ridges again formed in the manner before described,” read “the furrows are cut across the ridge, the labourers beginning at one end and working to the other; but no alteration is made in the original direction of the ridges.”



MODERN AGRICULTURE;
PRESENT STATE OF HUSBANDRY



IN
GREAT BRITAIN.

CHAP. XXIX.

*General Observations on the present State of the
Forests and Woodlands in Great Britain.*

THE means by which the cultivation of our fields may be improved having been described at considerable length, another subject, "the State of the Forests and Woodlands," now demands attention. This, it is true, does not so materially concern the cultivators of the soil in the character of farmers as many others that have fallen under review; but, considering the present complexion of the times*, it must in a

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A

particular

* A threatened invasion by the combined powers of France, Spain, and Holland.

particular manner interest every freeborn Brittain, who is anxious to retain that independence for which his forefathers on many occasions severely bled, and which can only be preserved by our preserving the superiority at sea.

“The Royal Navy of England (says the great Blackstone) hath ever been its greatest defence and ornament; it is its ancient and natural strength; the floating bulwark of the island; an army from which, however strong and powerful, no danger can be apprehended to liberty; and accordingly it has been assiduously cultivated even from the earliest ages *.”

In this supposed strength, however, we seem to have indulged ourselves till we have become indolent, and have forgotten that our store is not inexhaustible, or that there are people in other countries who, envying our liberty and our property, wish to turn our neglect to their advantage.

From the observations contained in the first volume respecting the supply of wood in each county for agricultural and other purposes, and particularly respecting the actual state of what are called the Royal Forests, neither the present stock of timber, nor the means of future supply, appear to be such as to give the inhabitants of a country, which, without a respectable navy,

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. i. p. 417.



navy, must soon become tributary to some more powerful state, a high opinion of the conduct of those, whose peculiar duty it is to watch over the means by which, what Blackstone calls the "national bulwark," can be erected or kept in repair.

It is not the writer's intention to blame one set of ministers, or of forest-officers, more than another; but to state generally, from what he has seen and learned to be the real state of the nation, in regard to a stock of ship-timber, that the conduct of the officers of the crown in this respect, during the whole of the now almost expiring century, has been so uniformly remiss, as to merit the most severe censure of every individual who wishes the extension of British commerce, or the continuance of British freedom.

Without bringing forward evidence to support this assertion, it may by some be said to be founded on false principles, and by others to be matter of opinion only, and in either case unworthy of regard. It will, however, appear in the sequel, that the charge, serious as it may appear, is too well founded, and that the consequences to be dreaded are no less ruinous than disgraceful to the British nation.

The increase or decrease of timber in England, fit for building or repairing ships of war, was long a controverted point, as matters of opinion always are. Commissioners having, how-

4 THE PRESENT STATE OF

ever, been appointed by Parliament some years ago to inquire into the state of the royal forests, &c. the matter was ascertained, and the decrease proved to be so great as ought to have given cause for general alarm, although it is believed not one measure likely in any essential degree to prove effectual for remedying the evil has since been adopted.

By the reports of these commissioners, as laid before the King and Parliament, it appears, that owing to the extreme negligence of those who were appointed by the state to watch over this source of national prosperity and security, the royal forests have in many instances become royal wastes; and that Britain, great as it is called, is well known to be reduced to the necessity of depending on other countries for a supply of navy timber. In a word, while our wars and our commerce require immense additional supplies of ship-timber, our forests and woodlands have been allowed to fall into decay. A perusal of the following extracts will establish the fact: "In these reports (say the commissioners) we have endeavoured to explain the defects in the present system of management; we have shown, that *the interest of the officers of the forests, and that of the public, are directly opposite to each other; and that such has been the effects of the wasteful system, that the woods, forests, and chaces belonging to the Crown,* though

though of very great intrinsic value, have furnished no more than 2000 loads of timber annually to the dockyards*.—That, besides the value of these 2000 loads, and of all that the forests produced from the year 1761 to 1786, there has been expended on them a further sum of L. 144,882 : 16 : 0 ; so that, instead of yielding any clear revenue whatever, they have actually brought a considerable loss upon the public : *While the forests are so far from being in an improving condition, that they are every year growing worse.*—That, according to the information we have received, there is a general and alarming decrease in the quantity of great timber growing in this country.—*That the quantity of oak-timber wanted for various internal purposes, and for the shipping employed in the trade of this country, will be as much as can be supplied from private estates.*—That the following statement will show the increase of commerce within the present century :

Imports in 1790,	L. 19,130,886	5	3
Imported in England alone in 1700,	5,907,175	1	10
Increase,	L. 13,223,711	3	5
Exports in 1790,	L. 21,643,953	1	2
Exports from England in 1700,	7,302,716	8	7
Increase,	L. 14,341,236	12	7

That

* See vol. i. p. 342.

“ That the consumption of oak-timber is probably greater than even the increase of the trade, because the whole must now be carried on in British bottoms ; whereas, previous to the American war, many ships built in that country were employed in our trade.—That if the royal forests shall be *improved and properly managed*, they may in time be brought to furnish a supply, which will prove a competent security against the scarcity which there will otherwise be too much reason to apprehend.—On the whole (add the commissioners), we are persuaded we shall not be thought to go beyond what is warranted by the information before us, when we form this conclusion : That if the prosperity of this country shall continue, the consumption of oak-timber for its internal purposes, and for the shipping necessary for the whole of our trade, including that of the East India Company, will, at no very distant period, furnish an ample demand for all that can be expected to be produced on private property in this kingdom ; and such is the present state of the growing timber, and the prospect of future supply, that this country will in all probability experience a fatal want of great oak-timber, and become dependent on other powers for the means of supporting her navy, if care be not taken to provide a supply in future, by the improvement and better management of the royal forests, and to reduce the consumption

sumption of it by the utmost care and frugality in the expenditure."

Were any person disposed to doubt the correctness of the reports above alluded to, or the sources of the commissioners information, they have still other means of satisfying themselves in regard to the deplorable state of the royal forests. Gilpin, in his forest scenery, mentions a particular forest, the name of which the writer does not at present recollect, which contains between sixty and seventy thousand acres. This forest, about the year 1660, furnished, by his account, 500 oaks annually to the dockyards. The number is now reduced to sixty; *that is, under one oak tree annually for every thousand acres.*

The once large and thriving royal forest of Sherwood is now probably the most extensive waste capable of improvement of any in England. From a perusal of the agricultural report of the county of Nottingham, in which that forest is situated, a pretty correct idea of the conduct of the superior forest officers in the kingdom at large may be formed, by what is there described to be that of the Duke of Newcastle, who is Lord Warden of that forest. While the part of it belonging to the crown is allowed to continue in a waste state, we are informed what wonders the Lord Warden has performed in improving what is called "a forest break;" that
is,

is, a tract of lands which was formerly part and portion of the forest, but perhaps, for his Grace's great attention in managing his Majesty's trees, or for some such onerous cause, disforested and assigned to him as private property. "Amongst these forest breaks (says the writer of that report) deserves to be named, in the first place, Clumber Park, belonging to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, between ten and eleven miles round, and containing in the whole about four thousand acres, which may be said to be a new creation within these thirty years, at which time it was a black-heath full of rabbits.—But now, besides a magnificent mansion, and noble lake and river, with near two thousand acres of plantations, above two thousand acres are brought into a regular and excellent course of tillage." Notwithstanding this meritorious example set by this Noble Duke as a proprietor, anxious, by the improvement of waste land, to add to the general stock of the country; yet, whoever has travelled through Sherwood Forest, from the town of Nottingham by Mansfield, &c. to Bawtry in Yorkshire, must be satisfied, that any encomium on his Grace's conduct as a private proprietor, in regard to the improvement he has effected on such lands as were formerly part of the forest, must be considered as a satire on his public conduct as chief officer of that forest; many parts of which is, although not in its present

sent state of any value, capable of being improved by planting or cultivation.

The new forest in Hampshire is the one of all others that is considered the most valuable, and on which most attention has been bestowed. The forest officers have lately adopted a new mode of rendering a considerable tract of land in that forest *extremely productive*, although not of oak-timber. Three enclosures, containing eight hundred and thirty-five acres, formed at the national expence, and for the express purpose of the preservation of timber, have been converted into a rabbit-warren *for the good of the British nation*; while other parts of the same forest, owing to the circumstance of several of the under keepers being great dealers in hogs, are better stocked with swine than with trees. The consequences resulting from adopting these *new methods* of improving the value of the forest lands, are proved to be such as might naturally be expected. In the report of the present state of agriculture in Hampshire, where the above two facts are stated, it is also mentioned, that by surveys made of the timber at different periods, it appears that an alarming decrease has actually taken place :

In 1608, there were estimated to be	315,477 loads.
And in 1764, there were only found	40,497
Deficiency in 156 years,	274,980 loads.

But that report furnishes facts, whereby we are enabled to place this matter in a still clearer point of view :

In 1764, there were found, as above stated,	40,497 loads.
But by a survey made in 1783, only	20,830

Decrease in 19 years,	-	-	19,667 loads.
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This ought not, however, *in justice*, to be considered as a national loss to the full amount of the value of nineteen thousand six hundred and sixty-seven loads of oak-timber fit for his Majesty's dockyards. For, to counterbalance this *trifling consideration*, the nation may, with considerable certainty, reckon on an increase of at least one pig or rabbit to the general stock for every load of navy timber that appears to be deficient. This, the writer is aware, some people may be disposed to consider as no real improvement in the management of national forest lands ; but there is every reason to believe, that the officers, who ought to know best, consider it as highly beneficial, and a mode that should be more generally adopted.

There is no man in the island less disposed than the writer of these sheets to treat with ridicule a great national misfortune, such as he is satisfied the decay of the royal forests will soon prove, unless an immediate and total alteration in the management takes place ; but as solid argument, from so respectable a quarter as the

commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the royal forests, &c. has had no effect in altering the conduct of those who are most culpable in this respect, holding them up to public ridicule appears to be the only alternative. This seems the more excusable, as, whether the evil arises from the negligence of a Noble Lord Warden, or the peculating disposition of a humble swine-breeder, the consequences to the nation must prove equally calamitous; and sooner or later, if such conduct is permitted, must have the effect of rendering the British people tributary to some more provident state.

Many other circumstances might be mentioned, were it necessary, to prove what the commissioners asserted, namely, "that the interest of the officers of the forest, and that of the public, are directly opposite to each other:" But it is of more importance to endeavour to point out a remedy; for unless the inhabitants of this country are to go along with Pope, in supposing that, in every case, "Whatever is, is best," they must see the absolute necessity of a reform, or rather of a total alteration in the whole system of forest management.

The miserable state of the royal forests cannot be supposed in every instance to arise from the negligence of those who have the superintendence of them. The code of forest laws, and the system of management, were established in ancient

times, and had more in view the preservation of the deer than the timber. The depredations committed by the deer, and by the cattle belonging to those having right of common, on the young saplings at an early period, often prevents any succession of trees from getting up; inso-much that, in some forests pretty well stocked with trees, scarcely a sapling is to be seen. On the other hand, in the forests that are private property, and whence deer and cattle are excluded at improper seasons, a regular succession of young trees every where appears. For these and many other reasons that might be mentioned, the best, perhaps the only plan that can be adopted with effect, would be to annul the forest laws; abolish the rights of commonage, by giving a compensation in property land in lieu of the common rights; and to lot and sell off every acre of forest lands now belonging to the Crown; under severe restrictions, however, in regard to keeping such an extent of them in woodland, as, if properly managed, would in time be more than sufficient for supplying the necessary quantity of navy timber. Were this done, every purchaser of a lot of forest lands would become his own lord chief-justice in eyre, lord warden, high steward, lieutenant, ranger, verderer, regarder, agistor, master, keeper, &c. all which offices he would perform with a due regard to the national prosperity; because, by adopting

adopting such measures as are best calculated to promote the growth of useful timber, his own interest would be advanced. The abolition of so many posts and places may appear to some as a serious innovation; but it is the only radical cure for an evil which is on all hands allowed to have got to an alarming height; and which will at last be found the only remedy, however long the application may be delayed.

The public interest certainly requires, that so valuable a part of the landed property of the country should not be suffered to remain longer in its present unproductive state. The present ruinous plan of management should be immediately altered, and other modes, and those under the direction of different descriptions of men, should be adopted for rendering them in some cases useful nurseries for timber, in others valuable corn and pasture fields; whereby the security of British independence, the agricultural produce, and the population of England, might be increased.

Because the royal forests have for ages been neglected, or because they are in many instances under laws and regulations in regard to management diametrically opposite to what ought in these times to exist, are by no means sufficient reasons why those, who hold the reins of government, should go on to treat with contempt every thing that can be said on this important subject.

It

It would be more becoming of them, and more suitable to the genius of the British people, were they to give annually an account of the measures adopted for securing a supply of timber for erecting a bulwark to defend this island from the incursion of foreign foes, than to open, with much pomp and ceremony, a budget of the affairs of a company of merchants of England trading to the opposite side of the globe. In the one, every inhabitant of these kingdoms would feel himself concerned; in the other, small is the proportion that is in any material degree interested. The success of a trade carried on by a few individuals, and which might, in all probability, be more advantageously done by the abolition of these chartered rights, by which they have procured an exclusive privilege, ought not to be considered as meriting greater attention from the British senate, than the means of procuring a regular and ample supply of timber, such as is necessary for building or repairing ships of war; for without these, our existence, as a free and independent state, is extremely precarious and uncertain.

While the royal forests remain subject to the forest laws, it is in vain to expect that any improvement in the mode of management will ever take place. The objects of the parties more immediately concerned are so inimical to the prosperity of the forests, and so opposite to the public

blic interest, as to render every attempt nugatory, without the intervention of the legislative authority. By that alone can the forest laws be abolished; and the officers declared, what they really are, neither necessary nor useful. It appears, therefore, of less importance to point out the errors of a system that was originally established, not so much for securing a regular and abundant supply of timber, as for the protection and preservation of deer, than to make some remarks on the best methods of managing private woodlands.

Although it is highly probable that many of the old private woodlands, in several parts of England, have been raised from seeds sown by hand, or by planting young trees, yet by far the greatest portion is evidently parts and portions of ancient forests belonging at some period to the crown, but long since disforested. These are now under different systems of management. In many instances, particularly in Scotland, the proprietors have been induced, from necessity, avarice, or some other cause, to cut down all the timber, and to convert the remaining forests into coppices. The ancient private woodlands of these kingdoms may therefore be described as grounds set apart for growing coppice or timber only, or for the growth of timber and coppice, or underwood jointly.

Coppices are woods raised from the stools of
timber

timber trees formerly cut down. The ages at which coppices are usually felled or cut, and the uses to which the wood is applied in the different districts where such woods are, have been particularly stated in the first volume.

The coppice woods, when the shoots are young, whether of oak, ash, elm, or birch, or a mixture of these with other sorts, are very little attended to in any part of the island. Fencing is the only particular which marks the difference between a good and a bad manager. At the same time, it may be remarked, that where the wood can be sold for different useful purposes, at various stages of its growth, as is the case in many parts of England, an essential improvement, in the management of coppices, might be introduced with great propriety. In all such situations, it would be profitable to the owners were the shoots thinned two or three times between each general cutting. The weedings or thinnings would do much more than defray the expence, while, by admitting a more free circulation of air, and by cutting off the supernumeraries, the principal shoots would advance more rapidly, and become by that means fit for sale, perhaps two or three years sooner than they do by being allowed to remain in a neglected state. This is a circumstance that particularly merits the attention of those who are favourably situated, in regard to market, for the various productions

tions of coppices, as saving two or three years in the regular cuttings would materially enhance the value of the land so occupied.

The most approved method of disposing of coppice, or other under-sized wood, that the writer is acquainted with, is that practised in Northamptonshire. When the season for cutting arrives, which is during the winter months, or before the sap begins to ascend, that operation is performed by people employed by, and who work under the direction of, the owner of the woods or his agent. The part of the wood intended to be sold is parcelled out into regular-sized lots to suit the convenience of the intended purchasers. The whole of the underwood growing upon each lot is indiscriminately cut and laid in one direction. So soon as the operation of cutting is completed, and the wood parcelled out in a proper manner, a valuation is put on each lot or parcel according to its quality, and the whole is then sold by public auction to such persons as incline to become purchasers, who, over and above the price of the underwood, repay the expence of cutting. This is, however, by no means the general mode in which woods of this description are cut. It is a very common but very bad practice, to sell the coppice under the condition that the purchasers are to be at the expence of cutting it down. This is often performed in such a careless manner, that the

stools are so greatly injured that they either rot and die, or a few weak stunted shoots only spring up.

The price of coppice or underwood varies so exceedingly, that it is almost impossible to form any idea of the value of the acre. Perhaps L. 8 or L. 9 may be not far from the average price of coppices, not remarkably situated in regard to market, and when they are cut every twelve or fourteen years. But the value of coppices depends on many circumstances; as, the sorts of wood, the uses to which they are applied, the price of bark, &c. In some parts of Kent, where hop-poles are in great request, an acre of coppice will yield sometimes L. 30 or L. 40 at a cutting. Whereas in Scotland, where the coppices are for the most part oak, and where the wood is chiefly used for fuel, or converted into charcoal, the value of the coppice consists almost entirely in the quantity and quality of the bark, the wood being little more than sufficient to defray the expence of cutting and peeling.

Several improvements in the management of coppices might certainly be effected were the owners to bestow due attention. It frequently happens, that from mismanagement in cutting many of the stools become useless, while seraggy thorns, brambles, &c. are allowed to spring up and occupy the place of more valuable plants. Were the owners of coppices in general to permit

mit their labourers, or other industrious poor people in the neighbourhood, to dig up the decayed stools and useless brushwood for fuel, under condition that they plant healthy vigorous stools in their place, the coppices by this management must necessarily become more valuable. Much damage also frequently happens from allowing the underwood to remain scattered over the surface of the wood for a considerable time after it is cut. Every person must be sensible, that if the cuttings are allowed to remain in this situation till after the young shoots begin to spring, it is scarcely possible to remove them without breaking or otherwise injuring these tender sprigs. In all auctions of coppices, it ought to be an article of sale, that the whole should be carried off the premises in a limited time; and the forester, or wood-officer, should receive injunctions to see this condition of the sale strictly implemented.

Much greater care is requisite in cutting coppices properly than the owners in many cases are disposed to bestow. It cannot be supposed that fifty or a hundred purchasers, with their assistants, when allowed to use their axes with no other view than to cut the wood which they have purchased, without regard to the success of what may be called the next or following crops, that any regard will be bestowed as to the proper manner of cutting. It is certainly of

much importance, not only for the future vigour, but also for the durability of the stools, that the stems or shoots should be cut in that manner which experience has proved most effectual for answering both purposes. The shoots ought to be cut as low as possible without injuring the stools: When that practice is adopted, the stools remain nearly even with the ground, and consequently in a much better state of preservation than when by cutting the stems at the height of six, eight, or ten inches; and this method of cutting frequently repeated, the stools get in process of time, as the writer has frequently seen, to the height of several feet above the surface soil.

Another common error, and which wood-cutters of the above description may be supposed very guilty of, is to leave the butt-ends of the stems jagged and uneven, and part of the bark torn off or loosened all the way down to the stool, than which nothing can be more injurious. The butt-end of the stems ought rather to be brought to a point in the middle, and the bark remain quite close and firm, otherwise dews and rain drop into the hollows, and either rots or otherwise proves ruinous to the future health and vigour of the stools. In short, to render a coppice both valuable and lasting, a regular system of management ought to be adopted. For the reasons formerly mentioned, they ought to

be thinned two or three times between every general cutting. The useless brushwood ought to be rooted out, and other more useful plants substituted; where too much water abounds, drains ought to be opened; the fences at all times kept in a substantial state of repair; and on no consideration whatever should the purchasers of coppices be allowed to cut down the woods. Men employed by the owners, and who are properly bred to the business, ought only to be employed; who, by bestowing proper pains in dressing and pruning the butts and stools as they go along, would thereby ensure the springing of numerous and vigorous shoots the following season.

In the ancient woodlands appropriated for the growth of timber, two modes of raising young trees are adopted. In some woods young oaks are allowed to rise from the acorns dropt from the trees, and in sufficient numbers to supply the place of those that are from time to time cut down. In others, the woods are resprung, as it is called, from the stools of timber trees formerly cut down. And as this is in the writer's opinion a very profitable mode for the owners, he shall endeavour to describe it minutely. When it is intended to respring a wood, every tree and sapling ought to be cut at the same time, in order to give all the young shoots an equal chance; which they would not have were a number of saplings,

saplings, however thriving, left standing, as they would overshadow the young shoots to such a degree as to injure their growth. In felling the wood, the same degree of care to the manner of cutting and dispatch in carrying off is necessary, as formerly recommended, as well as attention to putting the fences in proper condition. These woods should be carefully thinned at stated intervals: First, within eight or ten years of the cutting; the second should take place about the like distance of time; and so on during the period the trees are allowed to stand, which varies from 30 or 40 to 60 or 70 years, according to the soil and situation in regard to market. The writer has seen some woods of this description, which, from the number of trees on the acre, and the height and size to which they had arrived, added to the value of the different weedings, must have turned out very profitable to the owners, as many of the trees exceeded thirty feet in height and eighteen inches in diameter, a few feet above the ground, while not above thirty-five or thirty-six years had elapsed since the last cutting.

Raising large oak-timber fit for the dockyards on private estates cannot be considered as the most profitable system of wood management, at least while the commissioners of the navy continue to make no difference in price between timber of a very great age and size and that
which

which is of much smaller dimensions, and consequently has not occupied the ground for such a length of time. Where oak-trees are allowed sufficient room for their branches to expand, so that each tree will ultimately measure from eighty to a hundred feet of timber, fifteen or sixteen trees will cover an acre. As oak-trees will take from eighty to a hundred years to arrive at the size above mentioned in soils of ordinary quality, it is evident that the profit arising to the proprietor must be less than what he could derive from spring-woods, or from well managed coppice. There are many very judicious observations made on this subject by the bishop of Landaff, in the introduction to the Report of the County of Westmoreland, and which merits the particular attention of those who are cultivators of oak-timber. "If profit is considered (his Lordship says), every tree ought to be cut down and sold, when the annual increase in value of the tree by its growth is less than the annual interest of the money it would sell for.—This being admitted, we have only to inquire into the annual increase in the value of oaks of different ages." After various statements, his Lordship fixes upon thirty shillings each as the price of trees which should be cut down; as, if they be cut before they arrive at that value, or if they be allowed to remain till they will sell for a much higher price, the proprietor of the soil on
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which they grow will be a loser. He also mentions its being the general opinion, that it is more profitable to fell oak-wood at fifty or sixty years growth, than to let it stand for navy timber to eighty or a hundred, owing to the low price that is now paid for oak-trees of large dimensions either by the Navy Board or the East India Company. For this reason, he recommends the making a much greater than ordinary increase of price on timber of a large scantling; viz. that in place of four or five pounds per load, if they would give eight or nine pounds per load, for trees containing each one hundred cubic feet and upwards, every man in the kingdom would have a reasonable motive for letting his timber stand till it became of a size fit for the use of the navy; whereas, according to the present established price, it is every man's interest to cut down his trees before they arrive at a proper size to be useful as navy timber.

The growing of timber and coppice, or underwood jointly, except as spring-woods, although not perhaps the most profitable mode of occupying woodlands, is in a general view the most beneficial; as, besides providing for the present generation, a proper foundation is also laid for the supply of those that follow. It must be admitted, that large timber-trees and underwood cannot be raised in a mixed state to as great perfection or advantage as they might be separately.

rately. Oaks, when they have abundance of room, generally shoot out large collateral branches, which, extending to a great length all round, prevents any species of coppice under their influence from thriving or proving useful; therefore, in every woodland where large timber is a greater object than the underwood, the last must soon become trifling in quantity and inconsiderable in value, as the shade of large trees abounding with foliage will ultimately destroy the most promising coppice. The best way of managing woodlands of this description is, to attend rather to a regular succession of large trees than to aim at cutting a great number at any one period; when, at every cutting of the underwood, a fall of timber to a small extent only is made, a regular profit may be derived both from the fall of timber and the cutting of the underwood. Under such management, and when equal attention is paid to the prosperity of the underwood as to the timber, a few large trees may be felled every twelve, fifteen, or twenty years, according as the underwood is in the course of cutting, and the woodland still go on in a progressive state of improvement.

In treating of the more modern plantations, it is not proposed to take notice of those about gentlemen's places of residence, which are intended for ornament, but such only as are or may be raised on waste grounds incapable of

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being improved or rendered useful by cultivation. Of such wastes there are immense tracts in both kingdoms, which are at present of little value to the state or to the individual proprietors; but which, by the expenditure of a little money, and by a moderate share of attention, might prove useful and profitable to both.

The first steps to be taken for securing the future prosperity of a plantation is to fence it properly, and, where necessary, to drain off the superfluous water. These objects having been accomplished, a proper selection of plants, according to the various soils and situations, next demands attention. Oak, ash, elm, beech, birch, and the whole tribe of firs, particularly larch, Scotch fir, and pineaster, are the sorts of trees that, for the purpose of planting on waste lands, most particularly merit the planter's regard. The oak, we find from experience, will grow on soils of very different qualities; but that in which it thrives best is of a strong, deep, firm nature, rather inclining to clay, but free from superabundant moisture, and in a situation moderately sheltered. The ash will thrive in very exposed situations; and if the soil be deep and free from too much moisture, its richness is not so much an object, as ash will thrive tolerably well in very sterile soils, provided they are of the nature above-mentioned. The Scotch elm, which for waste lands ought to be preferred to all the
other

other sorts of elm, delights in a free mellow soil, rather damp than otherwise. The beech prefers a chalky, gravelly, or light loamy soil, and will grow in very elevated situations where such soils abound. The birch of all other trees is the least valuable; but as it thrives in soils of very indifferent quality, and in exposed situations, it may be added to the number of forest-trees with much propriety. The Scotch fir is proverbially known to thrive in the poorest soils, and in very elevated situations. The larch, although a native of Italy, has been found not only to grow in the climate of this country, but to thrive in almost all sorts of soils, and in situations so exposed as to render every attempt to raise even Scotch fir abortive.

The commissioners, appointed to inquire into the state of the royal forests, give such an account of the larch-tree, as cannot fail to induce every proprietor, who has any intention of improving such parts of his estate as are found incapable of cultivation by planting, to give it a decided preference. They state, that the larch is well known to grow very fast, notwithstanding its strength and hardness: That it grows higher up on the Alps than any other tree: That it is the natural produce of Russia, a climate colder than that of Great Britain: That in the northern and mountainous parts of Scotland it grows luxuriantly; and, lastly, that it is the best substitute

for oak, and perhaps equal to any foreign oak produced in the north of Europe. It cannot be considered improper, that, following so respectable authority, the writer, while he recommends the planting of all waste and otherwise unimprovable lands, especially in the lower parts of the country, should also recommend the planting a greater number of larch than of any other sort of trees, as, while he knows it can be done at a comparatively small expence, the returns will be quicker, and the profits of course greater.

So much depends on soil and situation, that to attempt a particular description of the proportions of the various sorts of trees that should be mixed together in the same plantation, under every circumstance that could occur, would be altogether impracticable.

The planting various sorts of trees in the same inclosure, with a view to timber, has been carried on for a longer period, and to a much greater extent, in Scotland than in England. The lords of manors in the latter kingdom claiming a right to the trees planted by their vassals, or those holding by customary tenure, is an unsurmountable bar to this means of improvement being generally adopted by the copy-holders. He must indeed be a patriot who will plant that another may fell; that will sow when another is to reap. The tithe on timber

ber is also a great obstacle to planting in England; few people will be disposed to expend money in planting wastes, when they know that the clergyman must receive twelve or fifteen *per cent.* of the gross amount of the sales, although he contributes nothing to the expence, nor can he receive any benefit from the land while in an unproductive state.

One good consequence (if it should have been the only one) of the rebellion of 1745, was the introduction of planting in Scotland on a large scale. The management of the estates, forfeited to the Crown at the close of that rebellion, was vested in several public-spirited gentlemen, who, fortunately for the country, devoted a considerable share of the revenue arising from these estates for the purpose of forming plantations. By this means not only a spirit for planting was introduced, but these plantations prove useful to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood, and profitable to the individual proprietors who are now in possession of these estates.

The commissioners of the annexed estates caused plant chiefly Scotch firs, from the idea, it is presumed, which at that time generally prevailed, that no other sorts of trees would thrive in such indifferent soils, or in such exposed situations, as were under their directions selected for the purpose of planting. Several of the great proprietors, who have more recently adopted this

this method of improving waste lands, have also planted chiefly Scotch firs, with a view of procuring shelter for the more delicate and valuable trees; and when that is obtained, they cause thin out the Scotch firs, and plant oak, ash, elm, larch, &c. in the vacancies.

This, which may now be considered the general mode of planting, is, for many reasons, preferable to a much more expensive one, that has been with some address recently introduced, namely, that of planting a mixture of all sorts of forest-trees at first, and so close together, that four or five thousand plants are deemed requisite for every acre. This method is recommended under the pretence that the work is done at once, and consequently less expensive than if it were done twice over, as in the former case; and also that being planted so close together, the plants act as a screen to each other, and that the whole will thrive alike.

The nurserymen, and those who make a trade of contracting to furnish plants, and to plant waste ground by the acre, will always find it for their interest to impress the minds of the proprietors with this idea, in order to secure a market for their more valuable plants, which would otherwise be required in small numbers only. But it must be obvious to every person acquainted with the subject, that to plant near three thousand oaks, elms, beech, chesnut, &c. besides larch

larch and Scotch firs, on the acre, can answer no other purpose than to increase the expence of the first planting from fifteen or twenty shillings to L. 3 or L. 4 the acre; a sum infinitely greater than the value of the fee-simple by the acre of many extensive tracts, which may be seen in several parts of Scotland planted in the manner now described.

In exposed situations, where shelter is indispensably requisite, it is no doubt highly proper to plant close; and the more exposed the situation, the closer the plants ought to be to each other. At the same time, it must appear extremely absurd, that while it is well known larch and Scotch fir will afford the necessary degree of shelter sooner than any other trees that can be planted on lands of this description; yet that six or eight different sorts of trees, all more difficult to raise from the seed, and consequently the plants more expensive to purchase, should be planted on the acre, seemingly for no other reason, than because the contractor stipulated for so many of each sort. The best and by much the least expensive method of improving waste ground by planting, is to form the plantation at first of Scotch firs, with a considerable mixture of larch. When these shall have arrived at such a size as that thinning becomes requisite, the Scotch firs should on every occasion be cut out to make way for the larch; and in every part of the
plantation

plantation where the soil is of superior quality, both should be cut out, and then oak or other trees, such as are adapted to that particular soil, may be planted with every chance of success. Where the soil is generally of a bad quality, the Scotch fir should be occasionally cut out, and the larch only allowed to stand for timber. Were this method more generally adopted, proprietors might plant three acres at less expence than one could be planted for where a great variety of plants are used, while fewer failures in attempts to improve waste land by planting would be the consequence of this prudent management.

One other observation on the subject of planting the writer begs leave to suggest, as meriting the consideration of those public-spirited proprietors, who, desirous to improve that portion of the waste lands of the country which has fallen to their share, have adopted the resolution of planting on a large scale. The first object of every such proprietor ought to be to establish a proper nursery of the various sorts of trees, suitable to the soil and situation of the lands intended to be planted. This will not only greatly reduce the expence of planting, but tend also materially to insure success, as plants habituated to the soil and climate have a much better chance of becoming trees than those reared in nurseries adjoining to cities and towns; where, owing to the more sheltered situation, and the means used

to force them rapidly up, they are so tender and delicate, that when planted out on a bare bleak exposed waste, a great number of them pine for a year or two, and afterwards die. Another advantage arising from the intending planter rearing his own plants is, that they are at hand when wanted. In place of sending, perhaps, ten or twenty miles for a load of young trees, which, when arrived, cannot be all planted for several days; when the nursery is on the premises no more plants need be taken up in the morning than can be planted in the course of the day. In short, whoever intends to improve any considerable extent of waste lands by planting, will do well to establish a nursery of healthy vigorous young trees adapted to the various soils which he intends to plant. By using this precaution his expence will be extremely moderate compared to what it would otherwise be, while the chance of success will also be infinitely greater.

The best methods of planting, pruning, and thinning plantations, are so fully detailed in other publications, that it is unnecessary here to enter on a particular description. The advantages resulting from improving waste lands by planting are well known, and very sensibly experienced by many individuals in both kingdoms, on whose estates this mean of improvement was adopted many years ago.

In a general view, it is by planting only that timber can now be provided for the navy, or for carrying on the foreign or domestic commerce of the country; and while it increases the value of an estate very far beyond what it would be were the wastes allowed to remain unimproved, the independent sovereignty of the state, considering the present condition of the royal forests, may be said to depend on the exertions of individuals in this respect. It has been suggested, that if the spirit for planting were as general in the nation at large as it is in some particular districts, the stock of timber would in time become too great; but while such negligence prevails in the management of the royal forests, proprietors need be under no apprehension, that the demand for oak or other timber will be so much reduced as to render planting as a mean of improvement to any considerable degree less profitable than at present. On the contrary, while population, commerce, and manufactures continue to increase, an increased demand for timber must necessarily take place.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Waste Lands and Commons.

THE waste and commonable lands in these kingdoms are of immense extent. A great proportion of them no doubt will for ever defy the utmost exertions of man to render to any considerable degree productive; but that several millions of acres are susceptible of improvement, either by cultivation or planting, must be acknowledged by all who have ever turned their attention to the subject. It has been for several years matter of surprise, that the executive government of the country, after being in possession of the report already mentioned respecting the present state of the royal forests, and of another still more interesting made by the privy-council, whereby it appears, *that for eighteen years previous to that period the land hitherto cultivated did not produce a sufficient supply of corn for the inhabitants,* should not have turned its attention to the improvement of these kingdoms. How

false and mistaken is that system of policy by which the chief actors on the national theatre are regulated in their conduct! While expending the blood and treasure of the nation on the conquest of such a barren and insignificant kingdom as Corsica, or of some paltry island in the western world, which experience has proved can only be held under a very precarious tenure, they allow their native fields to remain in a waste and neglected state. But if the want of grain and of oak, "the means of existence and of defence," are not sufficient to rouse them into more activity, it is not to be supposed that any thing the writer can say will have that effect. A board of agriculture has, it is true, been recently established; but the sum of money assigned for the purpose of carrying on the operations of that board is so truly contemptible (L. 3000 a-year), that were it not the respectability of the characters of the gentlemen who compose it, nothing could prevent that board, as a national institution, from sinking into insignificance. While several individuals receive ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand pounds a-year of the public money as officers of the crown, the inhabitants of Great Britain had a title to expect, that on the establishment of a board, instituted with a view of effecting the agricultural improvement of the country, it would have been put on a more respectable footing than any individual,

however meritorious his conduct, or however much his services might be calculated to promote the public good. It will be readily admitted, however, that this board, limited as it is in regard to funds, has already been productive of much good. The agricultural state of the nation has been ascertained, a spirit of inquiry has been set afloat, the obstacles to general improvement have been pointed out, and the British legislature, as well as the British farmers, are now informed by what means these obstacles can be most effectually removed, and how a spirit for carrying on improvements can best be excited.

THE unproductive lands of Great Britain may be classed under three heads; as,

I. The mountainous wastes incapable of improvement by cultivation or planting.

II. The crown lands.

III. The wastes and commons in the more fertile parts of the country.



SECTION I.

The Mountainous Wastes incapable of Improvement by Cultivation or Planting.

IN Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland, as well as in several counties in England, as Derby, Cornwall, &c. extensive tracts of wastes abound, which it would be in vain to think of converting either into arable or wood land. These comparatively unproductive lands might, however, become much more valuable than they are at present were better modes of management introduced. In many parts of England particularly these wastes are in a state of common, and very often unstinted in regard to the number or species of stock, which those having right of pasturage are at liberty to send. The absurdity of this system must at once appear obvious, as no person having interest in these commons will ever think of adopting such measures as are likely to render them more valuable for the only purpose to which they can be applied, that of pasturage; while the others, who have equal right, but who bestow no attention on the object, would derive a great share of the benefit arising from the spirited exertions of any individual. The legislature, by abolishing

ing these rights of common, or, which is the same thing, by passing an act of parliament, by which any proprietor having right of common may, without much expence or trouble, compel the others to a division, would lay the foundation for effecting these improvements of which such lands are susceptible.

Notwithstanding that, owing to the bare exposed situation of many of these wastes, it would be impracticable to improve them by planting, and equally so to convert them to tillage; yet means might be adopted, whereby in many cases the pasture might be so much improved, that a greater number of sheep or other live stock, and those superior in size and value, might be maintained upon them.

In many of these wastes there is at present so much superabundant moisture, and the soil is so chilled thereby, that the vegetation of grasses is either greatly retarded or altogether prevented; whereas were a little money and labour bestowed, abundance of sweet rich natural grasses would spring up, and supplant the coarse benty herbage that abound in all lands of the above description. There is perhaps no one mean of improvement that would in general prove more efficacious for reclaiming waste lands, and rendering them more productive, than draining. It may indeed be justly considered as the foundation of all other improvements. In construct-
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ing the drains, care should be taken to line them off in such directions as to answer the double purpose of drainage, and of conducting the water to such places where it might be rendered useful for the purpose of irrigation. Thus, while some parts of these lands were rendered more fertile by drawing off the superfluous water, others might also be improved by having the same water conducted over them. Paring and burning might also in many instances be adopted as a mean of improvement. By paring and burning the heathy sward of such waste lands as could be ploughed without an extraordinary expence (especially if lime or marl could be procured), white clover and other grass seeds might be sown with the greatest probability of success, and that even on such lands as it would be improper to sow with any species of grain.

One great source of improvement of waste lands, especially of such as are naturally dry, or that have been made so by art, is the dung of the live stock that pasture on them; and yet it is almost in every instance neglected. Sheep are the species of stock best adapted for such lands as must for ever remain in a great measure in the state of nature. The value of sheep dung as a manure, it was formerly observed, is well known in many of the English counties, where the folding of sheep is considered as the most substantial means of improving the crops both
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of grain and grass. One thousand sheep folded on an acre during one night will, it has been found from experience, drop a sufficient quantity of dung and urine to manure that acre sufficiently. As many store farmers in both kingdoms possess flocks of several thousand sheep, it is evident that they have it in their power, by adopting the practice of folding, to manure in time every acre of a very extensive farm. The improvement which might by this means be effected is inconceivably great; as, besides that the pastures would be much improved in quality, the additional quantity of grass would be so great, as to maintain double, perhaps treble, the number of sheep. This is an object of so great magnitude, both to the proprietors and farmers of such lands, and to the nation at large, as ought to induce those more immediately interested to bestow that attention in effecting it which its importance merits. Were such means as these adopted, the number of acres of this description, which could not be improved, would be very small compared with that which, owing to their being allowed to remain in a neglected state, may with too much propriety be termed unproductive.

SECTION II.

The Crown Lands.

THE lands annexed to the crown, together with those belonging to the Prince of Wales, the writer hesitates not to say are in general waste, although capable of the highest degree of improvement; that is, if they are not in a state of absolute waste, they are at any rate so unproductive as to be a reproach to the British nation.

How these lands are disposed of, and the shameful exactions made by the lessees of the crown, may be learned by a perusal of the following extract from the Report of the County of Hertford: "The honours of Clare and Mandeville extend into Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, Middlesex, and Surry, and still contain a great number of manors and separate parcels of lands, for which ingress and alienation fines and quit-rents are payable. These were long neglected, and payments refused to the applications of the stewards and lessees of the crown. In consequence of such refusals, informations have of late years been filed and proceeded upon in the duchy-court of Lancaster, and payments thereby enforced. *I understand the lessee is now paid*

one year with another, between four and five hundred pounds, while his rent to the crown is about ten pounds. The fees and perquisites of the steward are also considerable. When he receives a fine or quit-rent of one shilling, he charges three shillings for a receipt."

He must be an unconscionable steward indeed, who, for writing a receipt for twelve-pence, has the assurance to demand three shillings. But several instances might be stated where the lessees and stewards of the crown-lands act not only as petty tyrants but as extortioners. For if the above is not extortion, it is difficult to say under what name it can be called. These practices, although adopted as it were under the authority of the sovereign of the country, the tenor of whose conduct through life has evinced the utmost abhorrence of any thing of the kind, are nevertheless of such a nature as can affect only the immediate vassals or tenants of the crown-lands; and on that account, however improper it may be for courts of law to sanction such proceedings, cannot be denominated a national evil. But that such do exist in consequence of the crown possessing landed-property, is well known in every district where lands so held are situated. Whether the rents of these lands are improved to the same degree with those possessed by private proprietors in the neighbourhood is of no great importance; but

whether the lands are in the highest state of improvement of which they are capable, is a question in the solution of which every British subject is interested. How far this is the case may also be learned from a perusal of the above-mentioned Report of Hertfordshire; where it is stated, that "the new forest in Hamptonshire (part of the crown-lands) is alone of great extent; nearly the whole of which is properly tillage land, and bears all over the marks of former occupancy and of the plough. Very little of the timber thereon either is or ever will be fit for the purpose of ship-building; and it may with justice be considered a common only to the surrounding inhabitants and parishes, to the distance of fifteen miles and upwards therefrom, who have, in the following manner, acquired a right of common therein: Cottages have been built from time to time in different parts of the forest by herdsimen, who look after and tend such cattle as are sent to them, no matter from whom or whence, at so much a head; so that the new forest is become a common to a considerable part of the counties of Hants and Dorset." Thus, between rabbit-warrens, feeding grounds for the forest-officer's hogs, and rights of common pasturage acquired in the manner above-mentioned, that extensive tract of country, called the New Forest, it would appear is *fully*, although *not usefully*, occupied. So shame-

ful a prostitution of an extensive tract of improvable land, and at a period too when the inhabitants of the country have been reduced to such difficulties for want of bread, requires no comment. The mind of every person in the island must revolt at the idea of the crown-lands being allowed to remain under such management, while capable, by the ordinary methods of cultivation, of producing an immense addition to the general stock of bread, corn, and of animal food.

These lands are no doubt considered at present as unalienable from the crown; but British acts of parliament are not like the laws by which the Medes and Persians were governed, unalterable. Were an act of parliament passed for the sale of the crown-lands, together with those in the possession of the Prince of Wales, and under such rules and regulations as will be afterwards mentioned, it would give a greater spur to the improvement of waste lands in England than any other measure that the legislature of the country could adopt. In so far as the sovereign or the heir-apparent are concerned, it can never be an object to retain them annexed to the crown, as neither the present nor succeeding sovereigns would experience any material diminution of their revenues on that account. The best estate which a British sovereign can possess is the hearts of his subjects. That is an estate, to speak in the farmer's language, that may be improved

improved (and which the present sovereign has proved to be capable of the highest degree of improvement), without the application of fire or water, irrigation or burning, or the use of any other extraordinary means. *Nothing is requisite but to adopt a proper rotation of cropping, to be diligent and attentive to the culture, and careful to extirpate weeds.* Under such management the British nation will yield such returns as will render the yearly revenue of the sovereign sufficiently abundant for every purpose to which money can be usefully applied.

The sale of the crown-lands would at any time have been a measure calculated to promote the interest of the country. At the present moment it would be particularly so, when the inhabitants are groaning under loads of taxes unexampled in any former period; and so multi-form, and in many instances so excessive, as to prevent the labouring, who are the most useful part of the community, from enjoying in some cases a sufficient supply of the necessaries, and in too many any of the comforts, of life.

Were the crown-lands to be sold, much caution would be necessary in the disposal of them, so as to insure their speedy and permanent improvement.

The commoners, especially the poor people, who have by whatever means acquired rights of common-pasturage, should, in every instance, be allowed

allowed property-land in lieu of their common rights; and the arrangements should be made on such liberal principles, that no general murmurings or complainings should be heard. The commissioners to be appointed to settle these common rights ought to consider themselves as deciding between a great nation on the one hand, and a poor unsupported individual on the other, and always lean to the weakest side.

Nor would this be in any material degree against the interest of the nation; for, in a general point of view, it is of little importance who are the proprietors, provided the lands are properly cultivated; and instances are not uncommon, where the possessor of a few acres carries to market a greater quantity of superabundant produce, or, which is the same thing to the nation, maintains a greater number of people at home, than him who possesses double the extent. Were a compensation given in property-land in every case where common rights are relinquished, the poor people, in place of being obliged to remove, would be induced to build small cottages on their own property; and consequently much of the clamour against a general inclosure bill and the depopulation of the country would be suppressed. It appears indeed, if not an act of injustice at least of inhumanity for commissioners, acting under an inclosure bill, to give a poor cottager a compensation in money for his
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right of commonage, as no sum that he is likely to receive can be equivalent to a small allotment of land in property, on which, with care and industry, he might raise crops that would go a great way to maintain a numerous family. When a man so situated is turned out of his means of providing for himself and family, although with a few pounds in his pocket, it is a very great chance, especially during the existence of the absurd law regarding gaining settlements in parishes, whether he can ever afterwards be able to situate himself so as that his money may prove materially useful to him, or to those in whose welfare he is most deeply interested.

An act of parliament for the sale of the crown-lands should include a clause, either exempting the lands to be sold altogether from tithes, by giving the clergyman a proportion of the waste; or the tithes should be settled by some rule, whereby any unreasonable exactions on the future industry of the purchasers should be effectually prevented. As the payment of tithes in kind is the greatest obstacle to the improvement of English agriculture, it would be extremely absurd not to guard against any bad consequences arising therefrom in the sale of lands, which can be rendered productive only by the expenditure of considerable sums, and by the unremitting perseverance and assiduity of the purchasers.

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Another clause, as it would go a great way to ensure the speedy improvement of these lands, should also be added; namely, that for all lands so sold, that shall not be improved by cultivation, planting, or such other means as shall have been previously ascertained the best that can be adopted, within a certain time, seven years, for instance, from the period of the sale, the proprietors should pay a quit-rent of five or ten shillings the acre; and that the lands not improved in the manner previously agreed upon within the limited time should be subject to such payments for ever afterwards.

In order still more effectually to ensure the improvement of these lands, they should be erected into freeholds, and sold in lots from three to five or six hundred acres; and no individual should be allowed, under any pretence whatever, to purchase more than one lot. The good consequences of this proposed regulation are, it is presumed, obvious. Many speculators in the funds, as well as in the various branches of commerce and manufactures, would, by such a regulation, have it in their power to become independent proprietors, and to expend part of their capitals in the improvement of their native fields, whereby a stable foundation would be laid for the future prosperity of the country. In the allotment of these lands, the commissioners ought to have power to straight and regulate the

marches with the neighbouring proprietors previous to the sale; and to give off, or exchange by private agreement, a specified number of acres in order to effect this purpose, but in no case exceeding thirty or forty acres to any one individual. The remainder ought to be disposed of by public auction, so that every person might have an equal chance. Should any other mode of sale be adopted, the whole will turn out a job. A few great proprietors in the neighbourhood will become the purchasers, and the chief object of the sale will never be attained.

Were such general regulations as these adopted, and all manorial and forest rights abolished, the crown-lands would produce an immense sum, that might be applied to the exigencies of the state; and, in place of continuing longer a blot on the map of England, and a reproach to every administration that permits such a great national nuisance to remain unremoved, a general spirit for improvements would be introduced in that kingdom, which would necessarily produce in time a very great alteration for the better in the state of the country. An increase so great would take place in the agricultural productions as would ensure an abundant supply of food for the inhabitants, and relieve them from that dependence on foreign nations for bread corn to which they have been subjected for upwards of twenty years; and which, owing to the increase

of population, seems to become every year so much more alarming, as to threaten consequences so serious in their nature that the writer does not choose to mention them.

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SECTION III.

The Wastes and Commons in the more Fertile Parts of the Country.

BESIDES the unimproveable wastes in the mountainous parts of the country, the crown-lands, and the common pastures in every open field-parish, many of the most fertile parts of England are deformed with extensive wastes and commons, over which the inhabitants of several parishes have right of commonage. In the counties of Middlesex and Surry alone there are some hundred thousand acres of commonable lands highly susceptible of improvement, and which require nothing but an act of parliament by which they may be converted into private property, and afterwards ordinary cultivation to render them productive. But the most extensive waste in the island of naturally fertile soil is parts and portions of the counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, and Lincoln, called the Great Bedford-level, containing upwards of 600,000 acres of strong deep fen-land, which, owing to negligence in regard to drainage, is comparatively waste. As the improvement of this immense tract has been declared by many professional men highly practicable, and as the

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the additional produce which it is capable of yielding, not less, it is confidently asserted, than to the value of a million a-year, the public have a right to expect that the narrow-minded prejudices of a few merchants in some particular towns, who, dreading a competition in trade, are anxious to keep things on their present footing, and who have interest enough with some ignorant owners of fen-lands to obtain their assistance to defeat the measures of the more public-spirited proprietors, shall not continue to have so much influence with the legislature as to prevent the passing of the necessary acts of parliament, by which an object of so great national importance may be effected. That these lands are really capable of improvement, has been demonstrated in the clearest manner, in consequence of the exertions of two individuals, who procured an act of parliament, by which they were authorised to execute a small part of a great plan they had concerted for the general drainage and improvement of the whole. "The work (says the writer of the Report of the County of Huntingdon) has been done; and mark the event. The lands in question are improved almost beyond belief. They are, in fact, converted from a state of very small profit in most cases, in some of none at all, and in others of absolute loss to the proprietors, to one of the most fertile and most productive tracts that can be

be found of the same extent within his Majesty's dominions; while the trade to Wisbeach (the merchants of which place objected to the drainage), in consequence of an improved navigation to the sea, is so much increased, that the amount of its customs is more than four times what it had used to be."

In the course of the writer's survey of the county of Northampton, a tract of fine level land, called the Great Peterborough-fen, particularly attracted his attention. It contains six or seven thousand acres, equal in quality to any of the same extent in the Carse of Gowrie, and superior both in regard to climate and to markets for the sale of the superabundant produce. This common is subject to the depasturage of the horses, cattle, and sheep of thirty-two parishes in the neighbourhood, which comprise what is called the Soke of Peterborough. Many of the farmers, who reside in the townships immediately adjoining, declared that they did not consider their right of commonage as of any value. Hence it may be supposed, that those who live at the distance of ten or twelve miles cannot be much benefited from possessing that privilege. The truth is, considering the present mode of management, it is impossible any advantage can arise to the persons having right of common. At the same time, owing to the following circumstance, it has been proved, that, under proper management,

management, this fen might be rendered a very valuable tract of land. The annual expences of keeping the drains, bridges, &c. in proper repair is considerable; and the means adopted by those concerned for raising a fund for this purpose is, to let a certain number of acres to some tenant in the neighbourhood for a course of corn-cropping for three or four years. *The rent usually paid is from three to five pounds per acre.* From this account it is obvious, that were these 6000 or 7000 acres converted into private property, divided into proper sized farms, and let on leases of moderate endurance, the whole might be rented at from 20 s. to 30 s. the acre, and the produce become ten times more valuable than it is at present.

About ten years ago, the writer had occasion to perambulate the extensive and very valuable common of Long Sutton in Lincolnshire. It was at that time swarming with horses, cattle, sheep, asses, hogs, geese, &c. with which it was so overstocked, that those having right of common could only derive, if any, at best but a very trifling advantage from exercising that right. It has since been enclosed, although not without great opposition from some individuals who viewed their interest through a false medium. The result is what might naturally have been expected: This common, containing about 3000 acres, having been enclosed and converted to tillage, has
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turned out productive far beyond the calculation even of those who brought forward the bill. All animosities have subsided; the former contending parties now reaping abundant harvests, as the land produces, in immense quantities, corn, hemp, flax, woad, grass, &c. *

Numerous other instances might be mentioned, both of extensive and, if improved, valuable tracts of land in the more fertile parts of England lying in a waste and unproductive state; and of others that, having been divided, inclosed, and subjected to the plough, have become the most productive farms in the districts where they are situated. These already stated are, however, fully sufficient to show, on the one hand, the national as well as private advantages that may be derived from pursuing such measures as are necessary for allowing those who have right to the property to convert these wastes to the most valuable purposes to which they can be applied, that of raising grain and grass; and on the other, to evince the folly of adhering to ancient laws and regulations, instituted during the first stages of civilization in this country, and during the continuance of the feudal system. But this obstacle to the general improvement of the agriculture of England will be more particularly taken notice of under the proper head.

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* See the Report of the State of Husbandry in Lincolnshire.

The only other description of waste lands are the common pastures in the open field parishes. The mode in which these are occupied was particularly described in the first volume; and the only further remark that falls to be added here is, that while the open-field system of husbandry prevails, it will always be indispensably necessary to prostitute a part of the lands to common pasturage and common meadow, from the tenor of the express or understood agreement between all tenants so situated; or, in other words, to sacrifice them in a great measure to a system established at the original division of landed property in this country; which, however correct it might have been under the then existing circumstances, is acknowledged by all to operate as an unsurmountable bar to the introduction of modern improvements in agriculture.

The waste lands and commons in England are subjects that have attracted the attention of men of knowledge and public spirit for many centuries. They have been the theme of numerous publications; in which, however much the writers have differed as to the best modes to be adopted, there seems to be but one opinion in regard to the propriety and expediency of improving them. Still, however, the executive government has remained inactive; or when by direct application it did interfere, the expence to the parties applying became so great as to deter

others from following the example. But as the agricultural state of this nation is now better known than it was at any former period, and as the necessity of improving the waste lands has been very forcibly urged by every individual who has been employed to make reports of the state of agriculture in the different counties it is to be hoped effectual measures will at last be adopted, in order to enable those who have right to these wastes to use the proper means to render them, what many of them are capable of being made, productive. When the legislature shall remove the obstacles that bar the way to these improvements, the inhabitants of England may, in the words of a provincial writer on husbandry, look forward with a pleasing emotion to that day, when the neglected wastes shall have received that degree of improvement of which they are susceptible; when they shall wave with valuable crops of corn, bleat with profitable flocks, or be clothed with stately timber; and where there may be seen in every corner the industrious husbandman at once enriching himself, and benefiting the community in a manner the most substantial*.

Trusting that the period is not far distant, when the farmers in the districts, where the most improveable

* The Report of the State of Agriculture in the County of Westmoreland.

improveable of these wastes are situated, will have an opportunity of promoting their own interest and the public good by engaging in the cultivation of them, the writer shall subjoin a few observations that occur to him, as meriting the attention of those who may be disposed to embark in such undertakings.

It was formerly remarked how much it became the duty of every farmer to consider well the situation of the farm he proposed to rent, in regard to soil, climate, situation, as to markets, &c. These considerations as naturally fall under the review of the farmer who proposes to embark his capital in the improvement of waste land, as of him who is desirous to rent a farm of old improved land, where no impediments to good cultivation exist.

There are obstructions to the cultivation of waste lands in general that merit the farmer's most serious consideration. Rocks, stones, trees, brushwood, are sometimes to be removed, inequalities of surface to be levelled, superabundant moisture to be drained off. The farmer ought also to consider the distance from lime, marl, &c.; the means of communication with other places; whether materials for building houses or erecting fences can be easily produced; what is the rate of wages, and the mode in which farm-servants and labourers maintain their families. Without a thorough knowledge of these

particulars, it is impossible for any farmer to determine with precision what the yearly rent of hitherto uncultivated lands ought to be; far less the expence to which he must necessarily be subjected in improving them.

Although there are many tracts of waste lands in England that require little more than draining, inclosing, and ordinary culture; yet these bear a small proportion to the whole of the wastes in both kingdoms, which, by exertion, may be brought into tillage with advantage to all concerned; therefore, although it may be in a very few instances only where all the obstructions to cultivation are to be met with on the same spot of ground, some may, however, abound to such a degree as to render it very hazardous for any farmer to come under an obligation to remove them, without not only receiving some pecuniary aid from the landlord, but also a lease of such duration as to afford him ample opportunity of being rewarded towards its close for that expence of money and labour which he must unavoidably bestow at the commencement. In short, there is no arrangement that can take place between a landlord and tenant that ought to be made on more liberal terms on the landlord's part, than that respecting the improvement of waste lands.

After having so fully detailed the various means by which lands may be improved by draining,

draining, inclosing, &c. it will not be deemed necessary to give particular directions how to proceed in the improvement of waste lands under every variation of circumstances that can occur. Such directions, however minutely laid down, would not prove generally useful, as no prudent man, that has not been regularly bred to husbandry, will ever think of undertaking the improvement of extensive wastes; and to such as have practised husbandry as a business, the account of the means of improvement already mentioned, as usually adopted in these kingdoms, will, it is presumed, appear sufficiently explicit.

On the subject of the best means of rendering mossy soils productive, many treatises have been written. These, in general, contain more of the theory than the practice of reducing moss to an improved state of cultivation. The writer has seen many attempts made to improve moss in various parts of Great Britain; but no where with so great success as in the neighbourhood of Beith in Ayrshire, where John Smith, Esq; of Swineridge-moor has devoted his attention for twelve or fifteen years chiefly to that object, and with so great advantage as must render a detail of his practice extremely interesting to those who possess such soil, and who, like him, devote their attention to the most laudable of all pursuits, that of the improvement of their estates; who,

who, agreeing with Swift, "that whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together," have resolved to follow the example of this patriotic gentleman.

The first measure Mr Smith adopts, in order to render moss productive, is to lay it sufficiently dry. This he does by cutting master-drains to carry off the superfluous water. These drains (where practicable) he always studies to make in such directions as to divide the fields into square regular inclosures *.

After a field of moss is freed from superfluous water, the next thing he does is to form it into ridges, which he performs in the following manner: The whole field is first marked off into ridges of from six to seven yards in breadth. In the centre of each ridge a space of about twenty inches is allowed to remain untouched; in each side of that space a furrow or trench is opened, and the moss laid on the untouched space (similar

* Doctor Anderson some time ago published a practical treatise on peat-moss, which, although in some parts too philosophical to afford much information to the practical farmer, yet contains many useful hints in regard to the proper manner of draining moss.

lar to the practice of gathering a ridge a second time): the forming of the ridge being thus begun, the work is continued by cutting with a spade* about twelve inches in breadth, and as much in length as will keep together, and turning it over in a regular manner towards the crown, so as to have the appearance, at a little distance, of having been done by a plough. The division furrow between each ridge is made generally about two feet wide; the earth or moss taken therefrom is thrown upon the sides of the ridges, or applied to filling up any hollows that may appear in the new formed ridge, or in those immediately adjoining. The depth of the division furrows is regulated by various circumstances; but the principal object attended to is that of conducting the water to the main drain.

The expence of forming the ridges at first, and clearing out the division furrows, costs about L. 1 : 13 : 4 per Scotch acre. If the surface of the moss in its original state be unequal, particularly if it be greatly so, the forming of the ridges costs about L. 2 per acre.

The ridges being thus formed, the next operation is that of top-dressing with lime. The quantity used is from three to eight chalders per acre. It is of material importance that the lime

* It is hardly necessary to observe, that the whole ridgeing, harrowing, &c. is done by manual labour.

be laid on the moss as soon as possible from the kiln. The lime, after being reduced to powder, is carried to the field by men with hand-barrows made for the purpose.

The proper season for laying on lime to prepare the moss for a first crop is the preceding summer; in that case the lime, aided by the summer's heat, the rains, and winter frosts, makes considerable progress on the soil in the process of putrefaction before the spring, whereby a mould fitted for vegetation is formed.

The field having been prepared in the manner above described, Mr Smith sometimes sows oats in the proper season, no matter whether wet or dry, provided the field is free of surface water. The seed is harrowed in with a small harrow drawn by two men. Four men will harrow at least a Scotch acre and a quarter in a day; two of them draw the harrow by turns, the other two being in the mean time employed with spades breaking and dividing the mould. Oats, although sometimes sown as a first crop, frequently misgive, and therefore the common practice is to begin with planting potatoes, which has in no instance failed; the crops produced being, on an average of several years, not less than sixty bolls per acre, and the quality excellent. When the moss is broken up for a crop of potatoes, the sets are planted in the lazy-bed way; the method of doing which has been already de-

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scribed. When the potatoes are carried off, the field is formed into proper ridges, and the division furrows cleaned out as a preparation for the succeeding crop; the expence is about eighteen shillings the acre. When he sows oats as the first crop, in order to prepare the field for a second crop of oats, the furrows of the intended new ridges are cut across the field, and new ridges again formed in the manner before described, which costs about L. 1, 6 s. per acre. The preparation for any number of succeeding crops of oats (which are sometimes four or five before laying down to grass) amounts to about one pound sterling annually.

The first year's crop of oats is sometimes good, but in general very uncertain, the moss not being then reduced to proper mould; but the second and following crops run from five to ten bolls per acre. A first year's crop of oats after potatoes is seldom less than nine or ten bolls the acre, and sometimes above thirteen. Early oats are preferable to all others for yielding a great quantity of grain. The late oats running too much to straw, and lodging at an early period, the grain is frequently but mean in quality and inconsiderable in quantity. Mr Smith generally prepares the ground for the second and following crops as soon as convenient after the removal of those that preceded. After a complete first liming, five or six successive crops of oats

are taken without any other manure being applied; and also without any apparent signs of the soil being exhausted. On the contrary, the moss in the course of a few years becomes a rich dark brown coloured mould; and what alone seems to render it less productive of oats, is its running into luxuriant sweet grasses, as fox-tail, white clover, &c.

Along with the fifth or sixth crop of oats grass seeds (chiefly rye-grass) is sown, which in general produces an abundant crop of hay, and afterwards affords excellent pasturage. By this time the moss may be considered as in a permanent state of improvement; and if the fodder raised thereon is converted into manure and applied, together with the occasional aid of lime, it may be made to produce potatoes, grain, and grass, equal in quantity and quality to that raised from any other soil where the climate is in any degree similar.

Mr Smith is certainly entitled to great praise for having set an example so simple, so moderate in point of expence, and at the same time so efficacious for reclaiming moss. Within these twelve years, he, or rather his tenants under his directions, have reclaimed upwards of a hundred acres, which formerly produced nothing but peats and heath. Within these three or four years his neighbours have followed his example, whereby probably four or five hundred acres
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are now rendered both productive and ornamental.

Improvements will no doubt in time be made on Mr Smith's mode of management : that which appears most essential is to ascertain correctly the most proper state of moisture which this kind of soil ought to possess, in order to promote the greatest degree of putrid fermentation by means of the lime applied. With this view Dr Anderson's plan of draining appears peculiarly worthy of attention, more especially as Mr Smith has repeatedly experienced, that when moss is laid suddenly too dry it becomes peat upon which lime does not act ; and, on the other hand, when allowed to remain too wet, the lime does not produce its full effect.

Potatoes as a first crop has been found to be by far the best and most certain method of reclaiming moss, not perhaps so much owing to the dung which is generally applied, as a preparation for that crop aiding the putrid fermentation already begun on the moss by means of the application of the lime, as to the great assistance afforded by the potato stems covering the surface of the ground and causing a stagnation of air, whereby the exhalation of moisture is prevented, and the putrefaction or decomposition of the moss consequently greatly promoted.

Such has been the success attending Mr Smith's judiciously conducted experiments. If

effects so beneficial can be produced from due attention to the cultivation of the most ir reclaimable of all soils, what may not be expected to result from adopting proper methods for the improvement of others naturally more fertile? When the legislature shall emancipate the proprietors of England from the thralldom of common rights and forest laws; when the proprietors of the North of Scotland shall deign to pay attention to the improvement of their estates;—we shall then behold the cultivation of waste land as general in every other part of the island as it is between the Tweed and the Grampian Mountains, where almost every proprietor, free from restrictions of any kind, is at liberty to adopt, undisturbed, such measures as appear best calculated for the improvement of his estate; and where each, vying with the others, is pressing forward to promote the public good, by the extension of tillage and pasture lands, and of woods and plantations.

Were such a spirit for the improvement of waste lands introduced, and become general in the other parts of the island, as prevails in the district of the country above-mentioned, it would be impossible to set bounds to the future prosperity of these kingdoms. While commerce and manufactures would still go on to extend and become more advantageous, the in-

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crease of population would be rapid in proportion to the additional means of supporting it, and all would increase in a *ratio* of which at present none can form any just conception.

CHAP. XXII.

THE present state of the public and private roads, the means of the improvement of the soil, the effects of the various laws on the agriculture of Great Britain, and the progress of the weights and measures, and the advantages that may be derived from the establishment of one general standard, are subjects so intimately connected with the design of this work, that no apology is required for their introduction.

CHAP.

- I. The public and provincial roads.
- II. The public markets for the sale of the produce of the country.
- III. Some remarks on the laws and customs relating to the trade of the coast.
- IV. The importance of establishing a uniformity of weights and measures.

CHAP. XXXI.

Roads, Markets, Corn-Laws, Weights, and Measures.

THE present state of the public and parochial roads, the markets for the productions of the soil, the effects of the former and existing corn-laws on the agriculture of Great Britain, the present state of the weights and measures, and the advantages that must necessarily be derived from the establishment of one general standard, are subjects so intimately connected with the design of this work, that no apology is requisite for their introduction.

I. The public and parochial roads.

II. The public markets for the sale of the produce of the country.

III. Some remarks on the former and existing corn-laws.

IV. The importance of establishing a uniformity of weights and measures.

SEC.

SECTION I.

The Public and Parochial Roads.

Good roads, canals, and navigable rivers, Dr Adam Smith very justly observes, " by diminishing the expence of carriage, put the remote parts of the country more nearly upon a level with those in the neighbourhood of the town. They are upon that account the greatest of all improvements. They encourage the cultivation of the remote, which must always be the most extensive circle of the country. They are advantageous even to that part of the country. Though they introduce some rival commodities into the old markets, they open many new markets to its produce."

Nothing contributes so much to the improvement of a country as good roads. They may, indeed, be considered the foundation of all improvement. The military roads through the heretofore inaccessible parts of the Highlands of Scotland, after the Rebellion 1745, tended more to the civilization of the inhabitants of these districts, and to their future peace and subordination, than the abolition of the jurisdiction act, or any other measure adopted by government. In an agricultural view, the benefits derived from good roads

roads are incalculable. Before the establishment of turnpike-roads in England, many parts of that kingdom, like the Highlands of Scotland, were scarcely accessible. Coal, manure, grain, &c. as is still the case in many parts of Cornwall, were carried on horses backs. Where waggons were used, seven or eight horses were necessary to draw about two tons, and seldom were able to proceed above twenty miles in a day. Now, where turnpikes are established, or other means used for keeping the roads in a proper state of repair, the same number of horses will draw at least five tons, and travel nearly double the distance with much more ease. How absurd then for any person to scruple the payment of an inconsiderable toll, when the saving is so great and so evident; where the tear and wear in the one case is not one twentieth part of what it is in the other?

The forming and repairing of public and parochial roads, as it cannot be done without levying an annual tax on the inhabitants of the towns, as well as on those resident in the country, merits the serious attention of the legislature. This circumstance, added to the superior safety in which the inhabitants of these kingdoms travel when the roads are kept in a proper state of repair, ought to induce those in the management of public affairs to introduce an act of parliament, for the purpose of rescinding the ancient laws respecting statute labour, which
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have in every instance been found ineffectual, and to establish other general rules and regulations more likely to answer the purpose in the now improved state of the country.

The existing acts of parliament respecting the making and repairing roads, where the justices of peace cannot commute the statute labour, are not sufficient for the purpose of raising a fund sufficient for keeping the roads in repair. Where the justices of peace have it in their power to assess the inhabitants in a sum of money in lieu of the statute labour, it is in general not the want of means, but the misapplication of that means, or negligence in the general management, that is the cause why the parish roads are almost every where a disgrace to the country.

When farmers, cottagers, and others, are called to perform statute labour, perhaps in another parish, the work is performed in a careless indifferent manner, being considered as a legal burden, and which they are no doubt well entitled to do when carried to a distance, and compelled to work on roads, in the goodness or badness of which they feel themselves in a very small degree interested. When the statute labour is appointed to be performed within the parish, the period allotted for the purpose becomes a kind of holiday-time to the servants and labourers; the useful labour performed is scarcely half, not probably a third, of what it ought to be,

as the parish-officers or overseers, if they attempt to exercise any authority over them, are generally treated with the most sovereign contempt. In either case little benefit can be derived from calling out the inhabitants promiscuously to make or repair roads. Those statutes enforcing the performance of this necessary duty should therefore be abolished; and in every county the justices of peace ought to be invested with the power to assess the inhabitants of the district by some equitable *ratio*, whereby they would pay only in proportion to the benefit they received. Were this generally done, as is the case in several parts of Scotland, the counties divided into districts of such size, that the proprietors could conveniently meet as occasion required; the money arising from the commutation act collected by one person, who should be allowed a certain *per centage* on the sum collected, be continued during good behaviour, and be responsible for his conduct to the gentlemen of the district; the money so collected be afterwards expended under the direction of these gentlemen, and the whole be subject to the review of the quarter-sessions—the parish roads in these kingdoms would soon be materially improved. If to these regulations a power were added to mortgage the sum arising from the commutation of the statute labour for such a number of years, and to such an extent as was found

found necessary to put the useful private roads in a complete state of repair, they might in a few years be made the reverse of what they are at present. This last measure would be found the most effectual that could possibly be adopted, and is probably the only one that can be resorted to for the purpose of effecting an immediate and general improvement.

Considering the difficulties that are to be surmounted before good roads can be made in any part of Great Britain, it is matter of surprise that the public roads are not in worse condition. Where improvements in agriculture have for some time been general, the public roads are for the most part kept in proper order. Where improved agriculture has been recently introduced, the most vigorous exertions are making to amend the roads * ; and even in the most re-

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* The spirit of road-making has, within these few years, become very general in what may be called the central part of Scotland. The turnpike-roads, and bridges formed within these seven years, or now forming, or that are in contemplation to be formed, in the counties of Fife, Perth, Angus, Kincardine, and Aberdeen, must cost considerably above L. 200,000. The advantages which the inhabitants of that part of the country have derived, or will necessarily derive, in consequence of the expenditure of so large a sum in forming roads and bridges, must be very great ; so great, as it is hoped will be the means of awakening the proprietors of Wales and the North of Scotland to a due sense of the propriety of following so laudable an example, and excite them,

by

more districts more attention is bestowed to open roads of communication. The parochial roads in these kingdoms are almost every where execrably bad. In many parts of England they are narrow lanes, overshadowed with trees, and full of sloughs or ruts, permitting, except in particular places, one carriage only to pass at a time. In the open field parts of England, and generally in Scotland, they are crooked tracts, frequently encumbered with streams or pools of water, and commonly so deep and narrow as to be almost impassable for carriages of any kind during the winter months. In some instances indeed, the establishment of turnpike-roads has had the effect of turning the attention of the proprietors and farmers to the improvement of the parish roads, as they found from experience that turnpike-roads were comparatively of little advantage, if they were obliged to load their carriages to such a degree only that the horses could draw them through the ruts and sloughs in the private or parish roads, before they could derive any benefit from the use of those on which tolls were payable.

It is absurd to suppose that the parish roads will ever undergo what may be called a thorough repair,

by making turnpike-roads, to lay that foundation, without which no other permanent or substantial improvement can be established in any country,

repair, so long as the present system of management remains established. While the inhabitants of the several parts of Scotland are called out to perform statute-labour, under the direction of some poor old superannuated being, without judgment or authority, what benefit can be expected to result? Or while the inhabitants of a parish or township in England are allowed to choose an overseer annually, without a salary, from among themselves, whose business it is to enforce from his relations, friends, and intimate acquaintances the strict performance of a duty which, in all probability, he never discharged himself, there is no reason to hope that much good will ensue. Were an equitable and reasonable assessment to be made, the money collected by a person appointed for the purpose in the manner above-mentioned, and the repairing of the parish-roads farmed at so much by the year to active and intelligent farmers in the neighbourhood, they would be induced by a spirit of emulation and regard for character to perform the necessary labour in a substantial manner. In short, the money raised by commutation of the statute-labour, applied in almost any way, would go farther in repairing the roads than any exertions, however spirited or unremitting, are able to effect by the application of the statute-labour.

In determining on the proper lines of roads,
especially

especially of such as are intended to open a communication with other districts, it is necessary to attend to two particulars: First, That the road may be carried through such parts of the district as will most effectually answer the intended purpose, and without regard to the interest of this or that great proprietor; and, secondly, That the line should be as level as possible from one end to the other. In proportion as deviations are made from these, which ought to be considered fixed and established principles, in the same proportion will the road be ultimately found less beneficial.

In regard to the best form of roads, it seems generally agreed, that that degree of convexity only is necessary which will permit rain water to run gently off. When roads are made flat, or, as in Leicestershire and some other districts, concave, rain water will lodge upon them notwithstanding any precautions that may be used to prevent it. On the other hand, when roads are rounded up in the barrel form, which is too often the case, the danger of overturning a top-heavy load is greatly increased, especially when two carriages so loaded pass each other; as, when the weight of the load rests upon the wheel or wheels on one side, the least obstruction creates that dangerous equipoise, which every intelligent road-maker will make it his study to prevent the possibility of.

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The goodness or badness of roads must depend on the materials that can be procured, and the expence on the distance whence these materials must be carried. As these are extremely various in almost every district, it would not conduce to general information to enter into a minute detail of the different methods of making roads, or of the expence by the mile on any given *data*. In one particular respecting road-making, there is a too general inattention, which cannot have escaped notice. After a road has been put into complete repair, and at a very great expence, the trustees too frequently consider any further attention as unnecessary. In place of employing a few industrious steady labourers to fill up the ruts, shovel off the mud and other reduced materials, during the winter months, and to keep the drains constantly in repair, so that the rain water may run easily and immediately into them; the instances are numerous where nothing of this kind is attended to, and where the roads of course in a few years revert almost to their former state, and can only be rendered useful by another thorough repair. Thus a very heavy expence is incurred, which, with ordinary attention on the part of the trustees or commissioners, might have been avoided; and thus another application to parliament and a new rate of tolls are the consequence.

The measures which, on a great national scale,
appear

appear the best calculated to ensure the speedy and substantial improvement of the public and parochial roads, is to pass one general act of parliament, empowering the proprietors, who have right to act at the quarter-sessions, to commute the statute-labour for a reasonable assessment in money. They ought to have a power also of borrowing money on this fund to the extent necessary for putting the useful parochial roads in each parish in proper repair, and a further power of shutting up such as are not requisite; whereby the expence would be greatly lessened. Were the money to be levied by this alteration of the law to be applied to the repair of the parish roads only, and the turnpike-roads to be supported by the produce of the tolls, the beneficial effects of such an arrangement would soon appear, especially if aided by another, which, while it would prove advantageous to a numerous class of men, would tend most essentially to promote the general improvement of the country; that is, employing the military in making and repairing the roads in times of peace. The immense works tending to the improvement of the country, undertaken by the Romans and executed by the soldiers, furnish good hints to the British legislature of the present times. The pay of the soldiers, if they have families, is inadequate to their comfortable subsistence. If these (in times of peace) useless men were allowed

ed by the commanding officers, under an act of parliament framed for the purpose, to work on the roads by turns three or four days in a week, to be superintended by the non-commissioned officers, and to receive one half only of the ordinary rate of wages commonly given to day-labourers in the district, their situation would be much improved; they would become more temperate and useful members of society; and their labour, besides procuring themselves the means of subsisting more comfortably, would tend to the good of that public by whom they are maintained in idleness.

Several reasons may be urged, why the roads in so many parts of Great Britain continue in a neglected state. Turnpike-roads have been unpopular among the lower ranks in almost every county in the island where the establishment of them has been attempted. But, on fair investigation, it will, in a great many instances, be found that they do not object to the propriety of the measure, but to the manner in which it is executed, and the evident error in the principle on which tolls are declared by the various acts of parliament to be made payable.

One great complaint of those who are from necessity compelled to walk on foot is, that the turnpike-roads for the greatest part of the year are worse for their purpose, and at no time better, than before any improvements were made.

Every person who has paid any attention to turnpike road-making, must be sensible that this complaint is well founded. The carriages are usually drawn along the middle of the old roads, and the sides, which are covered with sward, and usually higher than the tract of the carriages, afford a dry clean path, on which the foot passenger can walk with ease and comfort. Whereas the best formed turnpike-roads are lower at the sides than in the middle, and the whole surface so covered with mud and filth during the winter months, and to such a depth, that the peasantry may literally be said to wade along in mire and dirt. This is no exaggerated picture; it is strictly true all over Scotland, as well as in many parts of England, where turnpike-roads are established.

There is something evidently wrong in the principle of that clause, in acts of parliament for establishing turnpike-roads, which declares, that for every horse, mare, or gelding, drawing a cart or other carriage, a certain *and an equal* rate of toll shall be paid. This is certainly the reverse of equity; for if a horse, who, with his utmost exertion, is not able to draw two hundred weight, is liable to the same toll with one who with ease can drag along ten times the weight, the poor man who is owner of the feeble horse is taxed for his poverty, as he pays nine times more, according to the benefit he derives, than the man
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of opulence, who is enabled, in consequence thereof, to purchase a stronger horse. Subjecting farmers to the payment of tolls when their horses and carts are employed in carrying manure, is also a grievance very loudly complained of in many parts of the country. It is certainly extremely impolitic in the legislature, when application is made for leave to erect toll-bars by proprietors who are so short-sighted as not to discern the propriety of permitting carriages loaded with manure to pass toll free, to comply with the request; and yet nothing is more common. By this means a discouragement is thrown in the way of the industrious farmer, and the establishment of turnpike-roads is rendered in so far of less importance.

These are the chief reasons why the peasantry and the lower class of farmers are inimical to turnpike-roads; and they ought to have weight both with the legislature and with those who act as commissioners under acts of parliament. Were regulations adopted, whereby commissioners in every case should be bound to form a foot-path on one side of the road, to be covered with gravel or some other proper materials, and which would probably in few cases cost above L. 20 a mile; that tolls on equitable principles only should be demanded; and that manure should either pay no toll, or only a trifling one—the many would not then be incommoded by the establishment

of turnpike-roads for the accommodation of the few, which, under the present system, is almost uniformly the case; nor would murmurings and complainings be heard on such occasions in any part of the island.

The attempt to establish turnpike-roads not only gives rise to complaints from the lower and middle ranks, who are generally thereby subjected to real grievances, but also to much altercation and wrangling at quarter-sessions and county meetings among those people (the proprietors of the country) who, of all others, are most deeply interested in the success of the measure. What a pity that gentlemen do not think of sacrificing on some occasions private interest for public good! That because the proposed line of road is not to take that direction which would to the greatest possible degree benefit their particular estates, they should use their rhetoric and influence to prevent the establishment of this most essential mean of improvement! Yet how often has the writer heard orations delivered at county meetings in Scotland against the introduction of toll-bars, which, if they contained not as much solid argument, were at least as long and as declamatory as any that Demosthenes ever delivered? This remark is as applicable to the proprietors of England as to those in Scotland. The very intelligent writer of the Report of the State of Agriculture in the Coun-

ty of Hereford makes some very sensible observations on the subject, and in the following words: "It frequently happens that the horrible demon of discord fallies forth on these occasions. If the great man, who generally takes the lead in laying out the turnpike-road, has no immediate interest himself, he has often a friend to oblige or an enemy to mortify. In the course of pretty long experience, I have very rarely seen a great man take it into his head to ruin a turnpike-road, who did not succeed in the face not only of reason, but of facts reducible to mathematical demonstration. Pride, more than interest, often influences the conduct on such occasions. A majority of votes at a turnpike meeting keeps up the spirit of the party, and serves to intimidate the enemy. The same party-spirit is sometimes visible in passing the road by the commissioners after it has been made. If the contractor be of the same party, three or four inches of gravel will do in place of twelve, to which his contract bound him; but if he gave his vote with the weak party, *woe be to him!*"

The notoriety of these facts is unquestionable; and the evil resulting from them is found to be so insufferable, that in many parts of the kingdom they are making the roads a second time for many miles in a stretch, and thereby loading the public with the annual payment of the interest of double the sum that was really requisite,
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had the roads been laid out properly at first. Whoever will take the trouble of adding up the sums paid by the public annually at the different gates in this island, will be struck with the immensity of the sum total *. Every misapplication of the money expended in making the turnpike-roads, through ignorance or worse motives, becomes an injury to that public who are bound to pay the interest of it; yet it somehow most unaccountably happens, that the government or legislature of these kingdoms have hitherto taken no more notice of the misapplication of this portion of the public property, than if they had not been interested in the public prosperity.

If to these obstacles to making good roads be added the demands made by the clerks of parliament, on any application for leave to improve a particular district of country by making commodious roads, and as a necessary consequence to erect toll-bars, it is no wonder that many people are deterred from making or joining in such applications. It is highly proper that public measures, such as inclosing parishes, making roads, building bridges, and forming navigable canals, should have the sanction of the legislature; but nothing surely can be more improper, than that the officers of parliament should have it in their power to bar the way to all improvement, unless they shall get four or five hundred pounds for informing the legislature, that an application has been

* It is said to be upwards of L. 500,000.

been made for leave to inclose a parish, with a view of rendering the lands more productive ; to make a road that would open a communication to a remote part of the country ; to build a bridge across a river, in which, for want of that means of conveyance, many of his majesty's subjects had lost their lives ; or to form a navigable canal, by which provisions and fuel, the two most indispensable articles of life, could be procured at lower prices and in greater abundance : yet for this, and for attending to their duty (recording the decrees of parliament), these exactions are made, and must be complied with. Suppose one application only made from each county in the year, and that L. 400 is the medium charge for passing such acts of parliament (and neither of these statements will be found beyond the fact), the sum annually drawn from the lieges in this way would amount to L. 34,000 a-year. Whether these charges are arbitrary, or fixed by some established rule, the writer has no access to know ; but that such charges operate against the general improvement of the country, is a well known fact, and ought on that account to be abolished.

The only other means of communication and conveyance necessary to be taken notice of is navigable rivers and canals. The canals already completed or forming have had wonderful effects upon the agriculture, as well as upon the manufactures

manufactures and general state, of many parts of Great Britain. These and the navigable rivers render the carriage of bulky articles more easy and less expensive. The conveyance of manure, fuel, &c. into districts, whither, without that medium, they could scarcely have been transmitted, has tended materially to the improvement of these particular districts; and the ease with which the inhabitants can export the produce of the country to otherwise almost inaccessible markets, while it tends to the same end, has also considerable effects on the general markets of the kingdom, and lessens the number of horses that would be requisite for exporting these articles from one place to another.

In passing acts of parliament for making canals, and deepening the beds of rivers so as to render them navigable, it would materially promote the public interest were the legislature to examine, with the most scrupulous exactness, the best means to be adopted, in order to prevent the deepening of this river, or the forming of that canal, from affecting the agricultural prosperity of the particular districts. Owing to some cause or other, inland navigations in many parts of England have proved ruinous to the adjoining lands; while in many others the injury done to the soil in the districts through which these inland navigations are carried, by obstructing the free passage of the rivers to the sea, and
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by their frequently overflowing their banks, and destroying the crops in the low grounds, is infinitely greater than any commercial advantages that can possibly be derived from them, except by those who are more immediately interested. To render canals, or inland navigations of any sort, of general utility, much circumspection is necessary in framing the acts of parliament, so that, while the commerce of the country is increased, its agriculture may not be injured. It might be a wise regulation, that, in every instance without exception, all sorts of manure should be carried at one half or one third of lockage dues, made payable for articles of any other description. Were this attended to, and minute investigation made as to the probable consequences that were likely to result from granting leave to form canals, and deepen the beds of rivers, for the purpose of inland navigations, these means of lessening the expence of carriage would not so often prove injurious to the best interest of the country,—its agricultural improvement.

SECTION II.

The Public Markets for the Sale of the Produce of the Country.

It was formerly observed, how much it became the duty of every farmer, before renting a farm, to ascertain its situation in regard to markets for the sale of agricultural productions. The markets in the more fertile and populous parts of Great Britain are in general good, and by means of turnpike-roads, inland navigations, and sea-carriage, easy of access; but were the regulations proposed to be adopted by government respecting the sale of grain established, and one general standard for weights and measures fixed upon, they would be still more improved. Far different, however, is the state of the markets in the remote parts of both kingdoms; and while the proprietors of these districts remain so inattentive to their own interests, it is not probable that any material alteration will take place for the better. The loss and inconvenience which the farmers in Wales and the Highlands of Scotland are often subjected to, by being obliged to dispose of their cattle on credit, has been particularly mentioned; and the proper

proper remedy, which requires only a little exertion of a few proprietors in particular districts to apply with effect, has also been pointed out. In these districts, the cultivators of grain are as ill situated, in regard to markets, for the sale of the produce of their farms as those who keep breeding stocks of cattle and of sheep. The effects of the want of markets, as described in the Agricultural Report of Pembroke, applies almost to the whole of Wales, and to every part of Scotland north of the Grampian Mountains: "The number of inhabitants, who live by handicraft business, or who buy their provisions, is but small in proportion to those employed in agriculture; which occasions the demand for corn and butcher-meat in our markets to be small. Hence those who grow a large quantity of corn find a great difficulty in selling it. We have corn-dealers at the ports, who purchase corn during the autumn and winter months, at a price always much below what is sold at the same time in the open markets. When wheat is six shillings the bushel in the market, the dealers will hardly give five, and other grain in proportion. The reasons for this difference between the dealer's price and the market price are these: He buys with a design to export his corn to Bristol, or some other English port; he must take care in buying to provide for store-house rent, portorage, freight, insurance by sea, commission

on sales at the port he sends it to, and, lastly, for his own trouble and capital employed. Besides all these expences, he runs another material risk: Our corn is generally so damp, that it will not keep in the lofts without being laid thin, and turned at least once a-week. If, in going to a port, a vessel meets with contrary winds, and is delayed on her voyage, the cargo frequently heats to such a degree as to reduce its price below prime cost, and then the dealers suffer a great loss by the venture."

From this account of the state of the markets in the remote parts of Great Britain, may be inferred the advantages which the proprietors of such districts would derive by establishing manufactures, whereby markets would be brought home, as it were, to every farm. Where that cannot be effected, inland navigations, where practicable, as being infinitely preferable to turnpike-roads for the carriage of corn to market, and for bringing manures in return, ought to become the next object of the proprietors attention. By these the possessors of distant corn farms are often put nearly on a footing with those in the more immediate neighbourhood of the best markets in the country. But it may frequently happen, that it would be impracticable to establish extensive manufactures, such as would have the effect of creating a market for the surplus-produce of a district, and physically impossible

impossible to form canals, so as to open a communication with otherwise distant markets: In such cases, good level well made roads is the only alternative. These, although an expensive mode of conveyance, are highly beneficial, particularly in inland districts remote from markets, and where it is impossible to form canals. Corn and meal are frequently carried in very great quantities from the southern counties of Scotland to the Edinburgh and Glasgow markets, which, without turnpike-roads, would scarcely be practicable, at least the expence to the farmers would be so great as to amount almost to a prohibition; and would necessarily compel them to turn their attention to the breeding and grazing, rather than the tillage system of husbandry, which, under such circumstances, would certainly turn out the most profitable.

How much the situation of a farm, in regard to markets, ought to influence both proprietors and tenants in making choice of one particular rotation or mode of cropping in preference to another, has already been stated. Where no exertions can approximate markets to a farm, which would otherwise be well adapted to the cultivation of grain, breeding and grazing cattle or other species of live stock is the best method in which such farm can be occupied. These, if not sold in the district, can be carried to distant markets almost without roads, and at a comparatively

comparatively trifling expence. Were the markets for the sale of cattle in the north of Scotland and in Wales as well regulated as in the other parts of Great Britain, the most beneficial consequences would ensue, as, except in these districts, scarcely any improvement can be suggested. The dealers in cattle, residing in the various districts of Scotland, except those in the south and south-west, generally move their cattle southward at two seasons, August and October; at which periods, what may be called the two great national markets for the sale of black-cattle are held at Falkirk in Stirlingshire. There it is not uncommon to see 30 or 40,000 black cattle exhibited for sale in one day. These being either purchased by dealers from England, or by some of the principal people in that line in Scotland, are thence driven forward to markets in England. Probably nineteen out of twenty of the Scotch cattle enter England by the way of Carlisle; and matters are so contrived, that there are cattle-fairs, one succeeding another at proper intervals, during the whole course of the journey from Carlisle to the southern parts of Surry. From Carlisle to the southern parts of Yorkshire the droves are conducted along the same line of road. They are then branched off from the great London road in different directions; some going through the eastern parts of the country towards Nor-

folk, Suffolk, and Essex; and the remainder through the western part of Nottingham, Leicester, Northampton, Buckingham, &c.; and such as are not sold in the districts above-mentioned are sent to Barnet in Middlesex as a centre, and are there exposed to sale. When any of them remain unsold after Barnet fair, which, owing to a combination of unfavourable circumstances, sometimes happens, they are sent forward to markets in Surry, Dorset, &c. which also succeed each other in the manner before-mentioned. From this arrangement, were the farmers in the remote districts to receive ready money for their cattle when sold, it is presumable, that from the competition which generally takes place among the dealers at the provincial fairs, they would receive a fair adequate price, considering the risk of lameness or death, bad sales, and the great expence attending driving cattle to such distant markets.

While every person will agree, that the regulation of the public markets of the country falls naturally and properly under the direction of the legislature, yet it is believed, there are none who believes that, during an impending scarcity in this island, it is either a prudent measure, or one likely to alleviate the evil, that the servants of the crown should become the national importers. Whoever has thought coolly and dispassionately on the subject, must be satisfied that
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the alarm sounded by the privy-council last year respecting the prospect of scarcity, and the measures afterwards adopted by the first Lord of the Treasury in his character of corn-merchant, tended in no small degree, in place of alleviating, to increase the evil. In consequence of the failure of the harvest of 1788 in France, M. Neckar, the then first minister of state, was the first person that became alarmed on the subject. Various orders of council were issued from time to time, as circumstances occurred or seemed to render necessary; at last, the executive government, *in place of encouraging merchants to import grain, became itself the importer of grain.* What was the result? All the merchants stood still, —mercantile speculation was at an end,—the evil increased,—riots, commotions, and excesses of every kind, succeeded; and besides the dreadful catastrophe to which that scarcity tended to give rise, M. Neckar himself informs us, that upwards of three millions Sterling of the public treasure were lost in these speculations. With such a recent and awful example before its eyes, it is astonishing that the executive government of this country should have trod in the same steps. Riots, tumults, bloodshed, and murder, were common in many parts of this island for some months; and would in all probability have greatly increased, had not the British parliament wisely adopted the resolution of allowing
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the speculative genius of the British merchants to exert itself, by forbidding the executive government from further interference. What has been the consequence? Plenty has flowed in from every quarter; while it is too evident, that had the first minister of state been permitted to follow out his ill-concerted scheme, the most dreadful consequences would have followed, and the waste of public treasure would have been immense. Independent of the bounty paid to the merchants on the importation of grain, the actual loss to the nation, in consequence of his commencing the business of a corn-merchant, is probably much greater, were the accounts fairly balanced, than what the French nation sustained from the individual speculations of M. Neckar. This appears the more likely, as, after parliament prohibited Mr Pitt from any longer carrying on the trade of a *national corn-merchant*, bounties were paid to the importers of foreign grain exceeding L. 490,000. These circumstances naturally lead to a consideration of the former and existing corn-laws.

SECTION III.

Some Remarks on the Former and Existing Corn-Laws.

ON this interesting subject much might be said, were it proper to enter into a minute detail of particulars. It was not till after the revolution that a bounty on corn was first adopted, as a measure calculated to promote the general interest and improvement of the country. That this regulation had the desired effect is an unquestionable fact, that may be at any time ascertained by an examination of the public records. From the period when the bounty was first granted till the year 1757, when the former corn-laws were first altered and partly suspended, the quantity of grain exported gradually increased every year, and at last became a very considerable article of British commerce.

It appears from the customhouse books, that in 50 years, from 1698 till 1748, there were *eight millions four hundred and thirty six thousand nine hundred and sixty-two and a half quarters of wheat exported*; besides four times that quantity of malt, barley, rye, and oatmeal*.

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* See Museum Rusticum, vol. ii. p. 291.

The rapid improvement that took place in the agriculture of the country, and in the extension of tillage lands, in consequence of the then existing corn-laws, evince the correctness of the principle on which they were founded, however deficient they might have been in some particulars; for, during the first thirty-five years of the period above-mentioned, the quantity of wheat exported was only - qrs. 4,083,247 0 bush.

Whereas, during the last

fifteen years, there were

exported

- 4,353,715 4

qrs. 8,436,962 4 bush.

So that the exports of the last fifteen years exceeded that of the preceding thirty-five no less than two hundred and seventy thousand four hundred and sixty-eight quarters and four bushels.

From the year 1757, when several material alterations were made in the corn-laws, till the year 1773, when the principle on which the original corn-laws were established was in a great measure abandoned, the export of grain gradually became less; and from the last mentioned period till 1793, that is, for twenty years, the balance was turned against Great Britain to the extent of four hundred and thirty thousand one hundred and fifty-seven quarters *per annum* *.

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* See Dirom's Enquiry into the Corn-Laws and Corn-Trade of Great Britain.

The immense difference in the above statements may be partly accounted for from the increase of population, without attending to the extension of tillage lands in the same proportion, but is chiefly owing to the corn-laws, enacted since 1757, having been framed particularly for the purpose of promoting the manufacturing interest; whereas those originally established went on the broad principle of promoting the general prosperity of the country, by a deviation from which a large annual importation in ordinary years is rendered indispensably necessary for the very existence of the inhabitants. "The corn-laws of Great Britain (says a late writer), as they at present stand, are extremely inadequate for the purposes intended by them. The principle of them, if any consistent principle can be fairly recognised, is erroneous. As they at present stand, they neither are, nor have been, nor can be, executed. They are calculated to give rise to jobs, chicanery, and frauds innumerable. They unnecessarily interrupt the internal commerce of grain, so as to distress the people and depress the agriculture of the nation. Under the pretext of attempting to lower the price of corn, they really enhance it beyond what it ought to have been, and give occasion for the interference of government in innumerable cases, where that interference

interference can only prove hurtful to the people at large *."

It is owing to an ill judged partiality to the manufacturing interest beyond that of those concerned in the cultivation of the soil, that the balance of the corn-trade has been allowed to turn so much against Great Britain; and unless a very material alteration takes place in the arrangement of the corn-laws, that balance will every year become more considerable, and the most serious consequences may be expected to ensue. If the principle on which the corn-laws are founded be right, why not extend it to the favourite object of every minister of state, in this country during the present century? "If it be a good principle, that the exportation of a commodity be restrained, that our people at home may have it cheaper, stick to that principle and go through with it. Prohibit the exportation of your cloth, your leather and shoes, your iron-ware, and your manufactures of all sorts, in order to make them cheaper at home; and cheap enough they will become till people leave off making them †." Let us apply this reasoning to the question before us. The opening of foreign markets for grain induced the farmers, who, as well as the manufacturers, are always attentive to their own interest,

* Anderson's Essays on Rural Affairs.

† See Scots Farmer, vol. i. p. 252.

interest, like them to exert every endeavour to supply the demand. They increased the extent of tillage-lands, as the ports of Europe opened to their view; so that while plenty reigned in the land, foreign nations were maintained on the superabundance of our crops. Mark the contrast. The various corn-laws that have been enacted in latter times having all in a greater or less degree one object only in view, that of furnishing the manufacturers with bread at a price that gave them an undue advantage over the farmers; and it being necessary to shut the ports of Europe against the farmers, in order to effect this object, they very prudently turned their attention to the bringing forward such articles to market as, if there happens to be a superabundance, they know the manufacturers will be permitted, after receiving their share of the profit, to export, as woollen cloth, leather, salted provisions, &c. For this change of system, under the existing circumstances, although having a direct tendency to increase the evil, are the farmers of Great Britain to be blamed? Certainly not. If the legislature shut out the farmers from the sale of their grain at foreign markets, except under rules and regulations, and on such terms as amount almost to a prohibition, who can censure them? If, seeing the cultivation of grain a losing concern, from their being under orders as to the mode of sale, as well as restricted in a great measure

measure as to price, they embark in another undertaking, viz. the rearing and fattening live stock, the surplus of which, through the medium of the more favoured classes of British subjects, the merchants and manufacturers, they know can be exported in one shape or other to any part of the globe; are they not right?

Doctor Adam Smith, in his Enquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations, gives a number of reasons whence to conclude that corn-laws of any description are unnecessary, if not improper. This, however respectable the authority above quoted, the writer is satisfied would be going too far, as, if the corn-trade were carried on without regulations or restrictions of any kind, the most baneful consequences would ensue. But if, in place of that constant shuffling and changing, that endless cutting and carving on the corn-laws of this country, which has taken place since the year 1757, one thoroughly digested and deliberately framed act of parliament, on the original principle of making British corn an article of foreign commerce, were to be passed, those concerned in husbandry would find it more for their interest to devote their attention to the cultivation of grain than under the existing circumstances they do; and of course such an act of parliament would have the effect to render corn not only abundant, but, when compared with
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other articles, moderate in price. If ever it shall become the ruling principle to guard alike the interests of the farmer, the merchant, and the manufacturer, plenty will again visit the land. We shall, besides being enabled to throw off our dependence on foreign nations for an annual supply of bread-corn, have it in our power, by our exports, to draw back from these nations the immense sums which, owing to the impolicy of the corn-laws, we have been obliged to expend. But till regulations respecting the sale and export of grain, as liberal as those which regard the manufacturing and commercial concerns of the country, are enacted into statutes, and the farmer be left as unfettered as the merchant or the manufacturer, neither of these events can be expected to happen.

The public newspapers have for some time teemed with the most severe and generally unjust reflections against the British farmers, on account of the late high prices of grain. A letter, which was written by a gentleman well known in the literary world, and published in the London Chronicle in 1766, when the farmers of that day suffered similar abuse, and were (as happened last year) plundered in many places, is the best answer that can be given to such unmerited abuse. This letter, some extracts from which are here subjoined, is addressed to

Messieurs the Public.*

" I am one of that class of people that feeds you all, and at present is abused by you all:—In short, I am a farmer.

" By your newspapers we are told, that God had sent a very short harvest to some other countries of Europe. I thought that might be in favour of Old England; and that now we should get a good price for our grain, which would bring millions among us, and make us flow in money, which to be sure is scarce enough.

" But the wisdom of government forbade the exportation.—Well, says I, we must be content with the market price at home.

" No, says my lords the mob, you sha'n't have that. Bring your corn to market if you dare.—We'll sell it for you for less money, or take it for nothing.

" Being thus attacked by both ends of the constitution, the head and the tail of government, what am I to do? Must I keep my corn in the barn to feed and increase the breed of rats? Be it so;—they cannot be less thankful than those I have been used to feed. Are we farmers the only people to be grudged the profits of honest labour? And why!—one of the late scribblers against us gives a bill of fare of the provisions at

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* *Museum Rusticum*, vol. i. p. 254.

my daughter's wedding, and proclaims to all the world that we had the insolence to eat beef and pudding. Has he not read that precept in the good book, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn? or does he think us less worthy of good living than our oxen?

"Oh! but the manufacturers! they are to be favoured, and they must have bread at a cheap rate!

"Hark ye! the farmers live splendidly, you say; and pray would you have them hoard the money they get? Their fine clothes and furniture, do they make them themselves, or for one another, and so keep the money among them? or do they employ these your darling manufacturers, and so scatter it again all over the nation?

"My wool would produce me a better price if it were suffered to go to foreign markets; but that, messieurs the public, your laws will not permit. It must be kept all at home, that our dear manufacturers may have it the cheaper; and then having yourselves thus lessened our encouragement for rearing sheep, you curse us for the scarcity of mutton."

It might have been added, By the impolicy of your corn-laws, you shut us out from a market for our superabundant grain, while at the same time you abuse us for not cultivating it to a greater extent.



SECTION IV.

The Importance of Uniformity in Weights and Measures.

THE variation in the weights and measures of every production of the soil, while those by which the various articles of commerce and manufactures are in almost every instance regulated by general standards throughout the island, is one evidence, among many others that might be adduced, how much attention has hitherto been bestowed by government in every particular connected with commerce or manufactures, while the interests of agriculture have been allowed to shift for themselves. There is, perhaps, no greater grievance under which the whole nation suffers, and that might be so easily remedied, as the disconformity of weights and measures. It is not a single county or district where this evil exists; every parish, nay, where the rents are paid in grain or meal, almost every estate, differs from others in these essential particulars: the consequence is uncertainty and wrangling in bargain-making, which frequently terminates in law-suits, and subjects individuals to many evil consequences.

The writer of the Report of the County of Stafford holds probably the most singular opinion on this subject of any person in Great Britain. He states, "that the custom of Wolverhampton market is eighteen ounces to the pound of butter, one hundred and twenty pounds to the hundred of cheese, nine gallons and a half to the bushel of barley, oats, beans, and pease, and seventy-two pounds to the bushel of wheat, *while that of other markets in the county varies, some being more and some less.*" And then adds, "much complaint has been made about a regulation of weights and measures, and obliging every person to sell by the statute or standard weight or measure; *but I cannot think it a matter of much importance.*" If there be ten or twenty different and indefinite measures used for the delivery of the same species of grain in a single county, and this is not uncommon in Scotland, is it of no importance to the proprietors, farmers, and corn-merchants, that they should be put upon an equality? If the pound of butter be in one market sixteen ounces, in another eighteen, in a third twenty-two, in a fourth twenty-six, and in a fifth twenty-eight, and the writer knows markets where all these various standards are established, is it of no consequence that one general standard should supply the place of so many? On this subject it is however unnecessary to enlarge, as the legislature of the country

country has at last turned its attention to the subject. The bill now depending before parliament for the sale of grain by weight will, when put in practice, evince the propriety of adopting the same regulation in regard to articles of less importance. A bill to regulate the police of the public markets, added to one or more for establishing general standards of weights and measures, would be attended with the most salutary effects; and if the clauses in that bill were strictly enforced by the magistrates of the different towns, or by those acting under their authority, which is at present too generally neglected, every man would be compelled to act an honest part, and the poor would not be oppressed. Sometimes we hear that a survey has been made of the weights used by the bakers in particular towns, and that some frauds have been detected. Are the bakers the only description of people in this island that use false balances, or weights under the legal standard? That it is proper for the magistrates to superintend this branch of police, no person will deny; but why the weights and measures of every individual who undertakes to serve the public should not be as strictly and as often examined as those of one particular class, it may be difficult to account. The bakers, it is true, are more frequently detected than other shopkeepers; but might it not be found, were equal attention bestowed, that they act upon
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the whole as honestly as the butcher, the mealman, or the grocer? In short, the magistrates of a town, who do not pay proper attention to the adjustment of the weights and measures used by the inhabitants in public situations, do not perform their duty, and are unworthy of the situations which they hold.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

Obstacles to further Improvements in Agriculture, and the means by which these may be most effectually removed.

THE attentive reader, before he can have proceeded thus far, must be satisfied that British Agriculture has not arrived at that degree of perfection to which it may be brought; and that various obstacles, which now impede the way to further improvement, must be removed, before any material alteration can take place in that respect. It shall be the writer's business in this chapter to point out what these obstacles are, the means by which they may be most effectually removed, and how much it is the indispensable duty of the legislature of these kingdoms to follow the advice of the poet :

“ ——— Let us cut off these legal bars
Which crush the culture of our fruitful isle :
Our wastes would then with varied produce smile,
And Britain soon a second Eden prove.”

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Were this desirable event to take place, were the legislature to turn its attention to this object, the most important to which it can be devoted, the alteration of such laws as bar the way to agricultural improvements, "our wastes would then indeed with varied produce smile," and the British nation advance to a greater height of splendour and prosperity than it can ever otherwise attain. Then would the extension of our tillage-lands, and the number of our herds and flocks, keep pace with our commerce and our manufactures, "and *Britain* soon a second Eden prove."

The obstacles that prevent the further improvement of the British territory are various, and many of them so complicated in their nature as, it must be admitted, will render it very difficult to effect new arrangements, whereby they may be removed, and all the parties interested in the arrangement completely satisfied. But in all national questions, the interest of individuals ought to bend to that of the public, otherwise no general improvement can ever be effected. In treating of this subject, it may be proper to consider the obstacles that impede the agricultural improvements of Great Britain separately; as,

I. The payment of tithes in kind.

II. The poor's laws and poor's rates,

III. Cus-

III. Customary tenures.

IV. The improper management of the crown-lands.

V. Church-lands.

VI. Lands held under deeds of entail.

VII. Commons and commonable rights.

VIII. Open-field lands.

IX. Thirlage to mills.

X. The game-laws.

XI. Obstacles in the power of proprietors to remove.

VOL. IV.

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SEC.

SECTION I.

The Payment of Tithes in Kind.

OF all the obstacles to the improvement of agriculture in England, there is none that excites such universal disgust, that is considered so great a grievance, or that is productive of so many evil consequences either in a political or a religious view, as the payment of tithes in kind. This oppressive and ruinous system has, as will be found in the sequel, been long abolished in Scotland; and which, added to two or three other salutary regulations that were long since established in that kingdom regarding landed property, and which will be afterwards taken notice of, has tended to excite that superior spirit for undertaking agricultural improvements, which is so evident beyond what is observable among the proprietors and farmers in England.

The tithe (in Scotland *teind*) may be defined that proportion of our rents and goods which is due to the clergy for performing divine service, and exercising the other functions proper to their several offices. We are taught by natural as well as revealed religion, that a part of our substance is due for the support and maintenance
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of the worship of God, and that those who serve at the altar ought to live by the altar; but whether a special proportion of a tenth of our yearly revenue is due to the clergy by divine and unalterable right, is a point that has been agitated with great heat *. It is well known, that under the Jewish government tithes were directed to be paid by divine appointment. "Under the Mosaic dispensation (says Bishop Butler), God himself assigned to the priests and Levites tithes and other possessions, and in these possessions they had a divine right; a property quite superior to all human laws, ecclesiastical as well as civil. But every donation to the Christian church is a human donation, and no more; and therefore cannot give a divine right, but such a right only as must be subject, in common with all other property, to the regulation of human laws."

Whether the claim to tithes on the principle of divine right remains still established in the Roman Catholic countries, the writer does not know; but this sort of claim to tithes has long since ceased in this country. The conduct of Henry VIII. of England and of Charles I. of Scotland furnish indubitable proofs of their holding a different opinion; as these kings, on the abolition of Popery, in place of transferring

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* See Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland.

the tithes from the Roman Catholic clergy to their successors in office, assumed the right of granting the greatest part of them to the nobility and great laymen of the time, and in Scotland, in particular, with the burden only of reasonable stipends to the Protestant clergy. The grants of tithes made by these kings and their successors having been either directly or indirectly ratified by parliament, are now to all intents and purposes the property of the successors of these original grantees.

Tithes appear to have been common in all ages. The first Christian emperor Constantine the Great was very liberal to the church; and, in the year 321, published an edict, granting his subjects full liberty to bequeath any extent of property they chose to the clergy*. This, however, in place of proving that a tenth of the produce was payable to the clergy in the early ages of Christianity, proves the direct contrary;—that the clergy, in place of having any legal right to tithes, were supported by charitable or gratuitous donations, and not by assessments made either under divine or human laws.

Montesquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, takes notice of the period when the payment of tithes was legally established. He says, “No one

* Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

questions but the clergy opened the Bible before Charlemagne's time, and preached the gifts and offerings of the Leviticus. But, I dare say, before that prince's reign, though the tithes might have been preached up, they were never established."

Gibbon, in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, not only mentions the period when the payment of tithes was established by law, but also assigns the reason in the following words: "The synod of Frankfort, held under Charlemagne in the year 794, furnished a cogent motive to pay the tithes. A capitulary (statute) was made in that synod; wherein it is said, that in the last famine the ears of corn were found to contain no seed, the infernal spirits having devoured it all; and that those spirits had been heard to reproach the people with not having paid tithes: in consequence of which it was ordained, that all those who were seised of church-lands should pay the tithes; and the next consequence was, the obligation extended to all."

Having thus stated shortly the origin of tithes, let us next inquire to what uses they were applied after the clergy acquired a legal right to demand them, and how far the clergy of the present day follow out in practice that principle upon which they were originally made payable. But, previously to this inquiry, it may not be
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amiss to give one specimen at least of the artifices resorted to by the English clergy to enforce payment of tithes, before the laws of the country had acquired a greater hold of mens minds than the bigotry of the Romish church. During the reign of Henry VI. which took place in the fifteenth century, the bishops and superior clergy framed what they called a penetential, which the priests were directed to use in auricular confession; and which was as follows: "Hast thou paid the tithings and offerings to holy church? Thou art to understand, that at the beginning of the world Adam was directed to give to God the tenth part of every thing; and God bade him teach his children to do the same. Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel tithed truly, and of the best; Cain tithed falsely, and of the worst. At last the false tither, Cain, slew Abel his brother; because Abel blamed Cain, and said he tithed falsely; wherefore God cursed Cain and all the earth. *So you now see that false tithing was the cause of the first manslaughter that ever was, and it was the cause why God cursed the earth *.*"

By such fabrications as this did the Romish clergy in these kingdoms enforce the payment of tithes and other exactions; and while they lived voluptuously, and were in the habit of committing

* Seldon's History of Tithes.

ting every species of debauchery, we are told by the famous Wickliffe that the poor perished with hunger, thirst, and cold.

In regard to the question, Whether the tithes in England are now appropriated to the uses for which they were at first paid, whether voluntarily or by compulsion?—it will be necessary to go back to the first introduction of the tithing system in that country. Bede states, that about the year 597 Gregory the Great, then Pope, sent a monk of the name of Austin into England to propagate the gospel, and to introduce a system of church-government among the people. Austin having succeeded to the utmost of his wishes, and having received a grant of land from the then king of Kent, besides donations from private individuals for the support of himself and the priests whom he had brought along with him, he found it necessary to apply to the Pope for directions in regard to the manner in which these royal and private donations should be applied. Gregory solved the monk's question, by replying, that it was the custom of the church to divide such voluntary gifts as Christians were pleased to bestow into four parts. To give one to the bishop, another to the inferior clergy, a third to the poor, and to set aside the fourth for erecting and upholding churches or places of worship.

In confirmation of this, Blackstone in his
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Commentaries remarks, that "at the first establishment of parochial clergy the tithes of the parish were distributed in a fourfold division; one for the use of the bishop, another for maintaining the fabric of the church, a third for the poor, and the fourth to provide for the incumbent; and when the sees of the bishops became otherwise amply endowed, the bishops were prohibited from demanding their usual share of these tithes, and the division was in three parts only."

The same author, treating of the state of tithes in the fourteenth century, takes notice of an act of Richard II. enjoining the bishops to allocate a proper sum out of the tithes of each diocese for the sustenance of poor parishioners; and adds, "it seems the people were frequently sufferers by withholding of those alms for which, among other purposes, the payment of tithes was originally imposed."

At what period the superior clergy of England first possessed themselves of the tithes, in defiance of the original destination, and of many statutes made to enforce an application of them to the uses for which they were first made payable, it is unnecessary to inquire. It will not be denied by the keenest stickler for the prerogatives of the church, that in place of one third of them being applied for the use of the officiating clergy, one third for the support of the poor, and

and the other third for the repairs of the churches, which, when the bishops had acquired land in mortmain, or free alms, sufficient to support their dignity, was the destination originally intended. The tithes payable in England are now very differently, although not so legally, appropriated. Those people who are most disposed to cry out, "The church is in danger!" when the real or supposed rights of the clergy are invaded by the slightest attempt to alienate the tithes, ought to reflect that the third of all the tithes in England, whether in possession of the church or of the laity, ought to be allowed for the support of the poor; that another third ought to be expended in the repairs of churches, the expence of which is now defrayed in almost every instance by an assessment on the parishioners; and that the other third ought to fall to the officiating clergymen, many of whom are the most miserable of the sons of men! For who can suppose that a classical scholar, with perhaps a wife and a numerous family of children, can feel the least ray of comfort dart upon his mind, when doomed to exist on the scanty pittance of L. 20 or L. 30 a-year? But this by the bye; for it is not intended to censure the present members of the church of England for alienations of rights that took place centuries ago, far less to insinuate that that respectable body have not an unquestionable

tionable right to the value of such a proportion of the produce of the soil as will enable them to fill the stations in which they are placed with dignity and honour. The writer's object is, to confine himself to a succinct account of the particulars in which the payment of tithes in kind operates against the introduction of improvements in agriculture and the advancement of religion; and, by describing the manner in which the alteration in the tithing system was brought about in Scotland, endeavour to point out a way in which the future payment of tithes in England may be arranged so as most effectually to promote the interests of agriculture, without, in the smallest degree, infringing the rights of the individuals concerned in paying or receiving them.

Various are the ways in which the payment of tithes in kind operate against the general prosperity of England. In respect to the farmers, it is unfortunate, although certainly the case, that the payment of tithes in kind operates more against the spirited improver than against the slovenly and indolent. Tithes, as the law now stands, cannot be considered so much the tenth of the natural produce of the soil as a tenth of the capital employed by the farmer in its cultivation and improvement. For instance, if a farmer pays his
ploughman

ploughman ten pounds a-year of wages, his labourer ten pence a day for his labour, or the landlord a hundred pounds of rent, he must consider himself as advancing one tenth part of these sums for the purpose of promoting the interest of the tithe-owner, who not only receives annually a sum equivalent to the tenth part of this capital, but that tenth part improved to the highest degree which the unremitting exertion of the tenant is able to affect. Mr Locke, in his *Treatise on Civil Government*, says, "It is labour which puts the greatest part of the value upon land, without which it would scarcely be worth any thing. It is to that we owe the greatest part of all its useful products; for all that the produce of an acre of wheat is more worth than the produce of an acre of as good land which lies waste is the effect of labour." Hence the farmer not only furnishes a fund to purchase the necessary labour, whereby an acre of land is rendered so productive, as to afford six, or eight, or ten shillings *per annum* of clear revenue to the tithe-owner, which, but for the application of that labour, would have remained unproductive for ever, in so far at least as he was concerned. So much is this the case, that if a farmer expends one hundred pounds on the purchase of manure, the improvement and cultivation of his farm, and the payment of rent, and if the value of the crop, when sold, amounts to

one hundred and ten pounds, he is actually a loser to the extent of five pounds, or what may be the interest of L. 100 for a year. He, indeed, gets his capital of L. 100 returned, but the tithe-owner draws the ten pounds or rather more, or, which is the same thing, the value; so that the farmer has employed his capital to enable the tithe-owner to draw a dividend of ten *per cent.* on that capital; whereas had he lent it on mortgage, or placed it in the funds, he would have benefited himself and his family to the extent of the interest or the dividend which he, in either of these cases, would have himself received.

So much for the absurdity of attempting to improve lands under such circumstances. There is another grievance to which farmers are subjected in the payment of tithes in kind arising from the harsh and oppressive manner in which the payments are exacted. The nature and extent of this grievance may be learned by a perusal of the following extract from the writer's Report of Northamptonshire, where it is stated, that "it has happened, though, to the credit of the tithe-owners be it said, the instances are very rare, where, when the tithes have been let for the purpose of oppression, the tithing man has been known to exert that authority with which he was invested; and has not only taken the tenth shock of corn and the tenth cole of
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hay, but also the tenth lamb, pig, hen, egg, &c.; nay, has even gone into the garden, and taken not only the tenth part of the fruit, but also the tenth of the produce of the kitchen-garden. Under such circumstances as these, it may be asked, who is the farmer that would not feel himself aggrieved?" From this it must appear obvious, that whether the farmer's interest or happiness be considered, it must be equally his desire, that some arrangement should be effected, whereby the payment of tithes in kind should be for ever abolished; for, as the writer of the Report of the County of Buckingham very justly observes, "it may be laid down as a proposition, that whatever profit arises to the cultivator of the soil, by the force of superior ingenuity and industry, should be held sacred by the church and government. If it be otherwise, it discourages the improvement of the soil; and thereby the church prevents the future increase of her tithes, and the government the future increase of its taxes." If the payment of tithes in kind operates against the interest and happiness of the farmers, the system will be found productive of equally disagreeable consequences, if regard be had to the interests of religion and the clergy. It will be found to disturb the harmony of society, and to be often the means of creating such divisions between the clergyman and his parishioners as renders the religious instructions

of the former of little avail*. While, in a political view, it is injurious, as tending to loosen that chain of intercourse and connection which it is considered of so much importance, especially in such *eventful times*, to keep united. The interest of the clergy would also be greatly promoted, were they to receive an equitable compensation for their tithes, in place of drawing them in kind, or of making annual arrangements with the farmers. It is the lay proprietors that are most blameable in respect to the rigorous

* Many instances might be mentioned of the teasing and vexatious circumstances that occur to disturb the harmony that ought to subsist between the clergyman and his parishioners. The following, extracted from the Report of Hampshire, shall suffice: "The clergyman and the farmer were at variance; and the farmer, determined to be even with the clergyman, gave him notice that he was going to draw a field of turnips on a certain day. The clergyman accordingly sent his team and servant at the time appointed, when the farmer drew ten turnips, and desired the other to take one of them; saying, he should not draw any more that day, but would let him know when he did." This, among many other instances, proves how desirable it would be to have some plan adopted to prevent these evils, and thereby remove the cause for complaint in the occupier, and at the same time render the lives of the clergy much more peaceable and happy. What a noise must the pulling of these ten turnips have made in the parish, and how little calculated was such a measure to promote the interests of religion or the happiness of the parishioners?

rigorous manner in which the tithes are collected. Clergymen, who act up to the character in which they stand in the scale of society (and the most violent declaimer against them will not pretend that a very great majority of that respectable body do not so) very generally sacrifice so great a portion of their just demands for the sake of peace and quiet, that, if the expence of collecting be added, there is scarcely any composition that can be proposed which it would not be for their interest to accept. Some instances there no doubt are, where the clergyman, being of a turbulent avaricious disposition, lays hold of every advantage, and collects his tithes to the value of the uttermost farthing: but it ought to be remembered, that a clergyman who does so, nay, that a clergyman who submits to the drudgery of collecting tithes in kind, must lose, in the opinion of his parishioners, a great share of that respectability of character which it is his indispensable duty to support. If the payment of tithes in kind operates against the interest of the farmers and the clergy, it does so in an equal degree, although in different ways, against that of the landholder and the public. In proportion as the spirit of agricultural improvement is checked the landholder must suffer; and as there are none of the laws existing in England that prove so great an impediment to the introduction of better modes of husbandry as those enforcing

enforcing the payment of tithes in kind, of course there are none that operate so powerfully against the landed interest. If the farmer is restrained from enclosing, draining, purchasing manure, in a word, from improving and cultivating his farm to the highest degree, who will deny that the proprietor's interest suffers? And that that is the case in numerous instances, in consequence of the operation of the tithe-laws, every man in the least acquainted with the present state of English agriculture must admit. The public comes in for its share of the loss arising from the effect which the tithe-laws have on the husbandry of the country, as, by their operation, the quantity of corn that might be cultivated, did no such laws exist, is diminished to an immense degree. Besides, they check industry, by depressing the farmer's spirit, and by preventing the circulation of money that would be expended in improvements and in the purchase of the manufactures of the country. Were no such laws in force, the proprietors and farmers, in consequence of the success of the improvements which in that event would be undertaken, would be enabled to purchase more of the manufactures of the country, pay a greater share of taxes for the support of the state, and after all live in greater ease and comfort than under the existing circumstances they are able to do. In short, the abolition of these laws seems

seems the only measure that can be adopted with any probability of success, at least the one that ought first to be attended to, with a view of again bringing the corn-trade to turn once more in favour of this country.

When all these various circumstances are conjoined, and when it is further considered that, except in Spain and Portugal, there is scarcely a civilized nation in the world where this system of church-slavery is allowed to exist, and that even in Russia tithes are abolished, it may be reasonably hoped the period is not far distant when England, the otherwise most favoured of all the nations, will be relieved by legal and constitutional means, and in consequence of arrangements made on liberal principles, from this almost Egyptian bondage.

It appears, from the accounts given by several writers on the subject of tithes, that they were paid in the latter ages of the Romish church with great reluctance. *That virtuous and consistent* monarch Henry VIII. a few months before he dispossessed the monks of the monasteries and seized the revenues, passed an act of parliament, the preamble of which bears: "That divers numbers of evil disposed persons, having no respect to their duties to Almighty God, had attempted to subtract and to withhold in some places the whole, and in some places great part, of their tithes and oblations, as well personal as

predial (tithes of corn, hay, and other produce of the soil), due unto God and holy-church; and pursuing such their detestable enormities and injuries, had attempted to disobey the ecclesiastical courts."

If, when improvements in agriculture were in their infancy, and at a period too when mens minds were held in slavish servitude by the clergy, the payment of tithes in kind could hardly be enforced, can it be supposed wonderful, that in these enlightened days it should be considered as a grievance? At a period when the principles of religion and of real genuine liberty are better ascertained, and more generally known, than in any former age, it is not surprising that laws compelling the payment of tithes in kind, laws which originated in edicts issued by bigotted kings under the influence of designing priests, should now be found inimical to the best interests of the country, and to the happiness of so many thousands. That this is the case, every inhabitant of this island has ample opportunities of satisfying himself, by a perusal of the Reports of the different Counties in England and Wales, as published under the direction of the Board of Agriculture. If these reports, after having been circulated among the proprietors and farmers in that kingdom for their correction and amendment, shall contain, when republished, the same or similar complaints regarding

regarding the hardships which the farmers are subjected to, and the injury which agriculture sustains, by the payment of tithes in kind, as doubtless they will, these complaints may justly be deemed the voice of the people proclaimed in a constitutional way; and as such merits the most serious and speedy attention of the legislature and of the clergy.

The various hardships sustained by the possessors of lands subject to the payment of tithes in kind are stated in these reports to the Board of Agriculture with a degree of temperance and candour that entitle them to particular regard. The secretary to that Board, in his *Annals of Agriculture*, delivers his opinion on the subject with great heat and unbecoming violence. After stating the high rate of tithes payable on a particular farm, he says, "If such enormous tithes as are here stated have no effect on the nerves of the good people of England, nothing will. Some of my correspondents have wished to be put *in this respect* on the footing of our neighbours the French; and in truth well they may. If something is not done to ease this pinching point, a contest will be raised by and bye in this kingdom hot enough to have dreadful effects. It is the fashion of the period in England to GRANT *nothing*; the consequence of which may be, *all* will be TAKEN *."

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* *Annals of Agriculture* for July 1790, vol. xiv. p. 9.

In his monthly publication for May 1791, Mr Young, when commenting on two clauses of an act of parliament that had been recently passed for enclosing a particular parish (the one regarding the compensation to be given to the rector in lieu of tithes, and the other regarding manorial rights), thus delivers his sentiments: "But let the people at large convince themselves, that they live in a country in which a great and general abuse is less likely to be remedied than in any other country of Europe; and this gross evil arises even from the merits of our government; it is these merits which furnish the wretched arguments so common against all innovation. Because our constitution was good on comparison with those of our neighbours, therefore the grossest and most horrible oppressions are voluntarily to be submitted to; because to remedy them would be to innovate! Our properties are to be so devoured by taxes (divided among those who vote them), as, in effect, to reduce whole classes of the people to poverty; and we are to be left groaning under the slavery of tithes, after they have ceased through half Europe; because any change in the constitution of parliament or the church would be dangerous. But those who are taxed fifty *per cent.* of their income, may surely ask, what epithet is to be given to such payments? Whether such are exempt from danger; or rather,

ther, if they are not the consummation of that evil, of which *danger* expresses only the apprehension?

“It behoves the government of this country to take warning in time. The progress of liberty is rapid and epidemical; it has effected revolutions in Ireland, America, and France: the very terror of the moment has confirmed the freedom of the Netherlands. The oppression of tithes has been almost swept out of Europe. The period advances with celerity when the people of England will be brought to say with one voice, *WE WILL NOT PAY THEM.*”

In the conclusion of the same paper he makes the following remark: “I have inserted the manorial clause only to show, that while the French have had sense and vigour enough to annihilate every species of feudal tyranny, the Parliament of England, in every inclosure act, recognizes and confirms it.” *

But——“May no such storm
Fall on our times, where ruin must reform.”

No! although a reform in the mode of paying tithes in England must be admitted by every impartial person as indispensably necessary, yet were the legislature to devote that attention to the subject which its importance demands, and the clergy

clergy to come forward with reasonable propositions for an adjustment of tithes, the matter might, and no doubt will, be settled to the satisfaction of all parties.

With a view of leading the reader's attention to the mode which appears best calculated to remove this greatest of all obstacles to the improvement of English husbandry, it will be necessary to take under view the present arrangement of the tithes in Scotland, and the circumstances that led to that arrangement.

The payment of tithes in kind, Mr Erskine, in his *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, observes, was continued for many ages in that kingdom; and, owing to the precariousness of the climate, was attended with more grievous hardships than could have taken place in the southern part of the Island. Every Scotch proprietor or farmer who presumed, after reaping their corns, to carry off any part of them from the field till the person having right to the tithe had drawn his share, were, from the first establishment of this right, subjected to severe penalties. The tithe-owner, on the other hand, either from indolence, a desire to oppress, or with a view of compelling the proprietor or farmer to purchase his tithes annually at a high price, frequently delayed drawing his share till great part of the crop was rotten. Notwithstanding several statutes were enacted with a view of checking the oppressive

pressive disposition which so often evinced itself in the conduct of the clergy in this respect, yet these grievances continued to exist, more or less, till the year 1633; when a decree-arbital, passed by Charles I. in 1629, for arranging and determining a mode, to be afterwards adopted, for the payment of tithes, was ratified by Parliament.

During the struggle for the establishment of this or that form of church government, great alterations had taken place, both in regard to those having right to the tithes, as well as in the manner in which they were exacted. On the Reformation, the benefices of the church fell to the crown, and were, at different periods, gifted for services, or other considerations; such as, for supporting universities, hospitals, &c. And the persons obtaining them were denominated Lords of Erection, and sometimes Titulars of the Tithes. They also got, or assumed, the right of nominating officiating clergy on all vacancies.—These alienations were, by act of parliament 1587, put a stop to, and such tithes as had not been previously disposed of remained with the crown unalienably.

The tithes which were then annexed to the crown may be valued and leased by the proprietor of the lands, but cannot be purchased. The officers of the crown are in use to grant leases of this description of tithes for nineteen years,
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and which are renewed as matters of course on paying a reasonable sum on such renewal. The sum demanded is regulated by the yearly value of the tithes; so that a capital, equal to between five and six years amount of the tithes, laid out at the commencement of the lease, and improved by compound interest, is sufficient to produce such a sum at the expiry as will obtain renewals to perpetuity.

Some of the clergy remained in possession of their benefices after the Reformation; and the vacancies that happened in such benefices were filled up by those who assumed the right of presentation. An act of parliament was soon afterwards passed, whereby the patrons were deprived of the right of patronage: but in compensation for this supposed hardship, it was enacted, that the right of all tithes, so possessed by the clergy, should be vested in those who had exercised the right of patronage. Patrons having acquired tithes in this way, are compelled by law to sell them at nine years purchase of the yearly value of the tithes.

The system of tithes and tithing having got into great confusion in consequence of the various alterations that took place in the government of the church of Scotland, those interested found it necessary to submit their several rights and claims to the determination and final award of Charles I. who, on the 2d of September, 1629, pro-

pronounced two decrees-arbiral, or judgments, which laid the foundation of that arrangement, respecting tithes and the payment of the established clergy in Scotland, which has been productive of so many good consequences.

The most important article in these two decrees-arbiral, is that which directs the valuation and sale of tithes; after which the landholder is intitled to the whole crop upon payment to the proprietor of the tithes of an yearly rent, or to purchase them at an easy rate, subject to a reasonable provision to the clergy. The words of this famous decree are, that "The rate of all tithes, where they are valued jointly with the stock, shall be a fifth part of the constant yearly rent that is paid for the lands." Another material circumstance in the valuation of tithes in Scotland is, that the rents of mills, those arising from recent improvements, and some others of less importance, are deducted from the gross amount.

By these decrees, which were ratified in parliament in 1633, the proprietors of land, not having right to the tithes, were not only found entitled to sue the titular in an action at law to ascertain their value, but, unless vested in the crown, to obtain a purchase of them on established terms, as before mentioned. Thus, ever since 1633, every landholder in Scotland has had it in his power to acquire right to his own

tithes, either by purchase or lease, so that they should be no longer payable in kind. Nevertheless, those who neglect to sue for a valuation may still be subjected to all the inconveniences of the former law; as, under such circumstances, those having right to the tithes may draw them in the manner commonly practised in England. The remedy, however, is so easy, that he must be a fool indeed who would subject himself or his tenants to such a slavish servitude, while he has it in his power, by a simple application to the supreme court of the country, to abolish it for ever. *

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* With a view of evincing the impropriety of landholders in Scotland embarking in expensive improvements without having previously ascertained the real state of their tithes, it may be proper to remark, that the proprietors of the parish of Govan, in the immediate vicinity of Glasgow, now one of the best cultivated districts in the country, expended very considerable sums on the improvement of their estates for a series of years, but without having investigated the actual state of their tithes. The principal and professors of the university of Glasgow had right to the tithes of this parish, but had been in the practice, time immemorial, of accepting a trifling modus or rate of composition. Recently, however, and after the whole parish had been improved to the highest possible degree that art and expence are thought capable of effecting, they made a demand on the proprietors for the payment of tithes in kind, or for a fifth part of the present real rent. The question came before the supreme

The writer recollects some instances where proprietors in the north of Scotland, having also right to the tithes, and being unwilling to forego all the power of harassing their tenants, which attached itself to the ancient feudal barons, still continued to draw the tithes. But they at last became ashamed of such conduct; and there is not now one instance where tithes are paid in kind, or where the tenants have any concern, either directly or indirectly, in the payment of tithes on the north side of the Tweed. How then, will an English reader ask, are the Scotch clergy provided for? The answer is easy; The stipends provided by law for the maintenance of the Scotch clergy are still payable out of the tithes. The judges of the court of session, who act as commissioners for the arrangement of tithes, have right to modify reasonable stipends to the parochial clergy. And accordingly, in all such cases, where the clergyman can show "that the parish is a place of more

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preme court of Scotland, and was decided in favour of the university. This, however, is no fault of the tithe-laws of Scotland as presently established, but an instance of the bad consequences likely to arise to those who neglect to adopt the measures which these laws point out in the clearest manner as proper and necessary to be taken in all such cases; namely, a valuation of the tithes previous to the undertaking of any expensive improvements.

than ordinary resort, that the cure is burdensome, or that the necessaries of life give a high price in that part of the country, or that the scanty allowance of stipend in that parish bears too small a proportion to the weight of the charge *, provided there are free and unappropriated tithes in the parish, the commissioners, on the application of the clergyman, grant an additional stipend, either in money, but more generally, where practicable, in grain, as being less fluctuating in value than money †."

Having now stated the origin of tithes, the hardships which the farmers in England are subjected to, owing to the continuance of the practice of paying them in kind, and the manner in which they were commuted in Scotland; it now only remains to suggest some means by which an arrangement equally beneficial to agriculture may be brought about in the former kingdom.

This

* See Erskine's Institutes.

† Owing to the free tithe in the parish having been previously assigned to the clergyman, some instances do occur, where the commissioners have it not in their power to augment his stipend, although too small for the decent maintenance of a numerous family. In all such cases it would be highly proper to apply part of the bishop's tithes, such as are now payable to the crown, for the purpose of rendering the situation of these clergymen, who are so unfortunately situated, more decent and respectable.

This has been for some time a very popular and much agitated question; and many difficulties have been invented, seemingly for the purpose of rendering it still more perplexed and complicated. Holding it as a sacred inviolable principle, that tithes, as now payable in England, were formerly appropriated for particular purposes, and although in many instances alienations were made at different periods; yet as these are expressly or virtually confirmed by those laws which protect national and individual property, therefore tithes, as now payable in the southern part of the island, are payable in conformity to the laws of the country. This being granted, no man that has a regard for justice, that venerates the constitution, or that would wish to see the rights of property invaded, but must be satisfied, that if the present mode of paying tithes is abolished, the clergy and the lay proprietors of tithes are, in law, justice, and equity, entitled to an equivalent. What that equivalent ought to be, and in what manner ascertained, becomes the question.

The writer is sensible that he has already been anticipated in what he is going to state by every person who has perused the preceding pages with attention. It is not by appeals to quarter-sessions, nor by special acts of parliament for this or that particular diocese or parish, that this great national question can be determined with

property:

propriety: It is only by a submission of all rights and claims of both parties to the determination of one respectable individual that the matter can be amicably or equitably determined. And who of all the inhabitants of this island is the most proper to be made choice of? The Sovereign of the country most certainly. The clergy need not be afraid to appeal to such an arbiter, as, in the course of a long reign, he has in no instance or degree infringed upon their rights. The landholders and lay tithe-owners may keep their minds at ease, as though he has evinced the most sacred regard for religion, yet it has been divested of superstition or bigotry. If Charles I. during the anarchy of church-government that prevailed in his time, found no difficulty in passing a decree in a similar case, which, having received the sanction of parliament as a matter of course, laid the foundation for a just and equitable arrangement of tithes, the matter may unquestionably be accomplished with much less difficulty at the present period.

Let us suppose what would be the probable consequences of such a submission. The arbiter would no doubt appoint commissioners to ascertain the yearly value of all the landed property in England, the produce of which was subject to the payment of tithes*. This being done,

* Were the yearly value of the lands ascertained by a government in place of one in money, and which might be easily

done, a fifth, a sixth, or any given portion of the free rent, after the payment of parliamentary taxes affecting land, would be declared due to the tithe-owner in lieu of the payment of tithes in kind. One clause of the decree would probably be, to compel every lay-owner of tithes to sell his right to the landholder at a fair and equitable, but regulated, price; and another would be, declaring the clergy entitled for ever to a fifth or sixth, or some determinate portion, of the present real free rent of all titheable lands to which they had right, and subjecting the proprietors to the regular payment thereof. Thus, at once, would a load, which has for many ages pressed down the spirit of the English farmers, be removed; and while all ranks and degrees applauded the equity and the propriety of the arrangement, a spirit for agricultural improvements would evince itself superior to any of which the records of this country make mention.

This mode is the less exceptionable, as it is almost similar to that adopted when acts of parliament are passed for enclosing particular parishes. At the first meeting of the commissioners named easily done by taking the average price of corn for the last seven or ten years (excluding, however, 1795), the clergy could sustain no loss, nor would after valuations, in consequence of the depreciation in the value of money, be rendered necessary.

named in the act, they direct, that all having interest may deliver in their claims, and the rights on which they claim, against a certain day. Those being afterwards examined by the commissioners (who are neither more nor less than arbiters appointed by the legislature), their decision constitutes the law in regard to the right by which the individual proprietors hold the lands, which by the arbiter's award is assigned to them. In place, therefore, of multiplying acts of parliament respecting the adjustment of tithes *ad infinitum*, one only, and that a very short one, seems necessary, authorising his Majesty to arbitrate between the owners of tithes and the landholders; and whose award, like that of the commissioners appointed under acts of parliament for enclosures, should be final, and have the effect of law.

Having laid down the general principle, it will not be expected that any attempt will be made to combat the little difficulties that may be started against the practicability of carrying the measures founded thereon into effect. These the wisdom of the arbiter is fully sufficient to obviate. One thing is certain, viz. that a decree-arbitral, pronounced by such high authority, and founded on these principles, would give universal satisfaction to every party concerned, and to every considerate individual in that kingdom.

SECTION II.

The Poor's Laws and Poor's Rates.

NEXT in order, and scarcely less oppressive to the farmer, or injurious to the interests of agriculture in England, are the poor's laws and poor's rates.

The poor's laws and poor's rates, those most impolitic of all impolitic laws, were unquestionably established on principles, and from motives, that do honour to the feelings of the legislative body of the time in which they were enacted. They were considered, not only by those who framed and supported them, but by all sensible and intelligent people, as the wisest and most philanthropic of human institutions. They had for their chief object the comfortable subsistence of those who, feeble through age or misfortune, were rendered incapable of exerting themselves in such a manner as to procure from their labour a sufficient supply of the necessaries of life, and that by means the most rational, namely, by compelling those who possessed none, or but a small share, of "the milk of human kindness" to contribute in an equal proportion with those who, from liberal and beneficent dispositions,

would have continued to do so without legal compulsion. It was expected, that the enacting of these laws would have had the effect of introducing a spirit of industry among the lower ranks; which, while it tended to render the operation of the poor's laws in a very small degree burdensome to the wealthy part of the community, would also have greatly promoted the prosperity of the nation. But how blind is human foresight, and how imperfect all human institutions! These laws, from the establishment of which so many happy effects were expected to result, have tended to consequences of the most alarming nature; consequences which, if effectual measures are not speedily taken to avert them, may and probably will soon end in universal ruin.

Lord Kames, in his *Sketches of the History of Man*, observes, "that in Dr Davenant's time the poor's rates were about L. 700,000 annually. In 1764 they amounted to L. 2,000,000. In 1773 they amounted to L. 3,000,000, equal to six shillings in the pound land-tax." So that if they have increased in an equal *ratio* since the year 1773, which will not be denied, they cannot now (1796) be less than L. 5,000,000, equal, by the above calculation, to ten shillings in the pound land-tax.

The poor's laws, notwithstanding the enormous assessments to which they give rise, are by no means

means attended with the advantages which were expected. In place of tending to improve the morals, or to increase the industry of the poor, they have had quite a contrary effect. It was but a short time after the enactment of these laws that the public were insulted with the famous song of

Hang sorrow, cast away care,
The parish is bound to maintain us.

And how much this sentiment seems to be impressed on the minds of the generality of that description of people for whose benefit these laws were framed, is well known to all who live under their influence. They require not to be reminded how necessary it is become to endeavour, by every possible means, to curb that spirit of licentiousness which so generally reigns within the walls of a parish work-house; whence shame and honest pride seem to be for ever banished.

The subject of the poor's laws is too complicated to be fully explained in a work of this nature; but in so far as they bear hard upon the agriculture of England, it is necessary to take notice of them.

These laws, from no alteration having been made in regard to the species of property assessable in virtue thereof, although they might have been considered equitable at the time they were

enacted, have, in consequence of the alteration of circumstances that have gradually taken place, become almost intolerably oppressive on the landed interest; while the merchant, the manufacturer, and the moneyed man, are either entirely exempted, or but in a very small degree affected. In short, poor's rates, according to the present establishment, is the most partial tax that ever was levied in this or in any other country.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, when poor's rates were first established, the commerce and manufactures of England were in their infancy, and three *per cents*. *India bonds*, *exchequer bills*, *scrip omnium*, &c. were unknown. That being the case, permanent property only, as the rents of lands and houses, could fall under the view of the then legislators as subject to assessment. Hence the reason why these laws, which, as formerly observed, may be supposed to have been arranged on equitable principles, according to the state of matters at the time, have now become an engine of oppression against two descriptions of people, the proprietors and farmers. That this is the case, is obvious on the most cursory view of the subject. The poor's rates, for instance, in the parish of Kettering, in the county of Northampton, were last year (1795) at fifteen shillings in the pound of *rack rent* *. Suppose,

* The writer has been informed, that, in the city of Norwich, the poor's rates were the same year at twenty-four

pose, therefore, that a proprietor in that parish was entitled to receive L. 1000 of rent from his tenants, they would at the same time have to pay the overseers of the poor L. 750 0 0

Suppose further, that a merchant manufacturer, or stock-holder residing in the same parish, had a clear annual revenue of L. 1750, arising from the profits of trade, or the interest of money in the funds, he would probably possess houses at an established rent of L. 60 a-year. In which case his assessment for the maintenance of the poor would amount to

45 0 0

Difference, L. 705 0 0

From this it appears, that the land-owner possessing an estate of the value of L. 1750 a-year, pays upwards of L. 700 towards the support of the poor beyond what could be legally demanded from the merchant, the manufacturer, or the stock-holder, under similar circumstances, in regard to the extent of funds. Were the

four shillings in the pound; that is, while the tenant paid L. 20 to his landlord, he was obliged to pay L. 24 towards the maintenance of the poor. The cause of so high an assessment was, as may easily be supposed, owing to the failure of the manufactures in consequence of the war.

the land-holders the only persons that suffer by this partial, and consequently oppressive tax, it would not be generally regretted; as it is well known that it is to their supineness in not applying to the legislature for an alteration of the existing poor's laws, that the evil has arrived at such a height, and that such heavy assessments are rendered necessary: but the farmers, unfortunately, are also sufferers, and, owing to the concurrence of several causes, frequently to a very considerable extent. In the instance now mentioned, *viz.* the parish of Kettering, the poor's rates, previous to the commencement of the war, did not exceed 5s. in the pound: so that from that period, and during its continuance, a tenant paying L. 100 a-year of rent to his landlord, has to pay L. 50 of additional poor's rates, and that whether he possesses his farm under lease or at the will of his landlord. If the farm be held under lease for a term of years, the tenant can have no recourse on the landlord, who generally stipulates that he shall pay all parish-taxes. If, on the other hand, it be held from year to year, the tenant is, from that circumstance, so dependent on the proprietor that he dare not make the least objection against paying the additional assessment, from an apprehension of being turned out of his farm, and thereby deprived of the means of providing for his family. The proprietors therefore pay only the ordinary poor's rates.

rates, the tenants being subjected in payment of such as are rendered necessary in consequence of the nation being at any time engaged in war, or that a stagnation of paper-credit, or any other circumstance occurs whereby the manufacturers are interrupted. While the manufacturers can promote their own interest by employing the labouring class of people, they do so; but when they perceive they can no longer benefit themselves, they send them home to their different parishes, to be maintained at the farmer's expence till the return of peace, or other favourable circumstances occur, to create a new demand for manufacturing labourers. Mr Marshall, in his *Rural Economy of the West of England*, Vol. I. p. 290, mentions, as an evidence of the mischief which manufacturers are capable of entailing on agriculture, "That a woollen manufacture was some time ago set on foot at Modbury, and carried on with spirit and with success to the individuals who prosecuted it; but their end being answered, the manufacture ceased, *and all the vice and debility which it had drawn together were left as a load upon the parish.* The consequence of which is, the occupiers of land within the township of Modbury are now paying five shillings in the pound to the poor, while those of the surrounding parishes do not pay two shillings." Numerous instances of this sort might be mentioned to prove, that

while the manufacturers pocket all the profit that can be derived from employing these people in prosperous times, they consign them to the farmer's charge the moment the wages which they choose to give is inadequate to their maintenance, or when they, the manufacturers, cannot profit by continuing them in their service.

One other circumstance connected with the poor's laws of England requires to be mentioned as productive of many evil consequences, namely, that which regards the gaining a settlement in a parish. It was stated in the Introduction how much superior the situation of all ranks of people was in this country than in some parts of the continent of Europe; particularly in Russia, where the peasantry may be considered as appendages of the soil, being doomed to cultivate a particular tract of land, whoever became the proprietor. It is with much regret the writer must mention, that a species of slavery exists in England nearly of the same nature with that now mentioned. Can that country be called free where the great body of the people are bound to reside in the particular spots where they were born? Yet this is certainly the case in England. The peasantry of the present day are bound by laws, enacted long before they were born, to confine themselves to their own parish; and if perchance they emigrate to a *strange country*, although perhaps only to the adjoining parish, they
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are not only prevented from exercising the rights of active citizens ; but when there is the least prospect of their becoming burdensome to the inhabitants, they are hunted home like a parcel of strayed cattle or sheep that had overleaped the inclosures in which they were confined. Why not permit the poor to seek a livelihood wherever work offers, or inclination leads them ? In place of being subjected to be taken up as vagrants, if found out of their own parish, a parish perhaps in which they cannot find employment, would it not be for the interest of the community were they permitted to go where they could render essential service to the public, and where they have a certainty of supporting themselves and their families, without being reduced to the necessity of making a mortifying application to an unfeeling parish officer ? Were such an alteration to take place, both the rich and the poor would experience the benefit. But while the laws of parish settlements remain on their present footing, let Englishmen, while they boast of the liberty they enjoy, reflect on these, and they will find that they accord not with genuine liberty ; that wherever such laws are in force, rational liberty must be considered as in shackles.

While this order of things remains, while the manufacturers shall continue in a great measure exempted from contributing towards the ex-

pence of maintaining those people who have become old and infirm in their service; while the farmers are subjected to such heavy exactions on every interruption to which the manufactures of the country are liable—agriculture must remain in a languid state, and the spirit of the farmer continue depressed.

But let us turn to a more pleasant subject, and by describing the manner in which the poor in Scotland are maintained, evince in how small a degree the expence of their maintenance affects the agriculture of that country.

The sum necessary to maintain the poor in any particular parish in Scotland, especially in the country, amounts only to a few pounds in the year; which may be accounted for by stating the simple manner in which they live; oatmeal cooked in various ways, and potatoes, being their principal food. When reduced, by unforeseen accidents, or old age, to have recourse to the parish for relief, they are satisfied with a very small sum, two or three shillings in a month; asking in charity what their neighbours in the same class in England demand as a matter of right. Indeed few, but such as are destitute of relations able to support them, make the application; it being considered disgraceful, both to themselves and their relations, to have their names entered on what is called the *poor's roll*.

The money necessary for the support of the

poor is, for the most part, made up of voluntary contributions from the more wealthy inhabitants, which takes place every Lord's day before or after divine service.—There is also an old Scotch act of Parliament still in force, by which the proprietors and tenants are liable to be assessed equally in such additional sum as may be judged necessary to support the poor of each parish: but this act is very seldom put in force, except in large towns, or in those parishes in the neighbourhood of the mountainous parts of the country, where the greatest number of poor people reside.

The slavish law of parish settlement is unknown in Scotland; the labouring poor, like the rich, are at liberty to settle where they can dispose of their time, or their talents, to the best advantage. Should a poor family, after having received supply from the funds of the parish in which they reside, remove to another, that parish in which they formerly resided, in some cases, supply their necessities for two or three years after their removal; at the expiration of which period they become entitled to receive a share of the funds of that parish in which they are resident. But although this regulation has, it is believed, the sanction of law, there are very few instances where it becomes necessary to enforce it.

The maintenance of the poor in Scotland cannot therefore be said to be oppressive to any

class or description of the inhabitants. The writer, however, cannot avoid laying hold of this opportunity of remarking, that a disposition to encourage the introduction of poor's laws appear to evince itself in many parts of that kingdom. A pound rate is already established in Berwickshire; 3 d. or 4 d. on the acre of improved land is payable by the farmers; and in many country parishes in other districts yearly assessments are made. Should the negligence of the proprietors to the situation of the poor be the means of rendering the establishment of additional poor's laws necessary, their conduct must be considered by every thinking person as reprehensible to the highest degree. The existing laws are fully sufficient for the purpose of securing the means of subsistence to the industrious poor. By their being at liberty to continue to reside in the place where they had spent the active part of life, after they are able no longer to procure themselves the necessaries of life by the labour of their hands, the manufacturers are compelled to contribute more liberally to their relief than if, under the authority of laws of settlement, the manufacturers, or mercantile or moneyed people, residing in towns, had it in their power to order them, in the decline of life, when their period of labour is for ever past and gone, to the parishes in the country in which they were born.

A late publication bears the title of *France*

a Warning to Britain!—Let the proprietors of Scotland ever consider the situation of England, in consequence of establishing impolitic poor's laws, as a warning to them against any innovation of that nature. Let it be their study that the poor in Scotland shall pass the remainder of their days without ever having to apprehend the fear of want; but let them never make such an establishment as can tend, in any degree, to render morality and industry empty names.

The following very sensible observations, contained in the *Scots Farmer*, vol. i. p. 253, respecting the operation of the poor's laws in England, merit the most particular attention of every proprietor in both kingdoms. “For my own part (says the writer), I am not so well satisfied of the goodness of these things (the mode of levying taxes for the support of the poor, and the manner in which they are maintained): I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion about the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer; and, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. There is no country in the world

world where so many provisions are established for them; so many hospitals to receive them when they are sick and lame, founded and maintained by voluntary charities; so many alms-houses for the aged of both sexes, together with a solemn general law made by the rich to subject their estates to a heavy tax for the support of the poor, as in England. Under all these obligations are our poor modest, humble, and thankful? and do they use their best endeavours to maintain themselves and lighten our shoulders of this burden? On the contrary, I affirm that there is no country in the world in which the poor are more idle, dissolute, drunken, and insolent. The day you passed that act (addressing himself to the public), you took away from before their eyes the greatest of all inducements to industry, frugality, and sobriety, by giving them a dependence on somewhat else than a careful accumulation during youth and health for support in age and sickness. *In short, you offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not now wonder that it has had its effect in the increase of poverty.* Repeal that law, and you will soon see a change in their manners. *Saint Monday and Saint Tuesday* will soon cease to be holidays. Six days shalt thou labour, though one of the old commandments, long treated as out of date, will again be looked upon as a respectable precept. Industry will in-

crease,

crease, and with it plenty, among the lower people. Their circumstances will mend; and more will be done for their happiness, by insuring them to provide for themselves, than could be done by dividing all your estates among them."

The good sense contained in these observations ought to make a deep impression on the minds of all who read them, as every day's experience proves that the poor's laws in England, as they are presently executed, are attended with all the evils above described; and that an alteration of them has become indispensably necessary, as one of the most effectual means that can be adopted for preserving the constitution entire.

The British legislature has been for some time greatly alarmed at the rapid increase of the poor's rates in England, and seems fully sensible of the pernicious consequences likely to ensue, without some radical cure is speedily applied. Of what nature that may be, the writer will not hazard a conjecture. Very material alterations must at all events necessarily take place in regard to the objects of taxation, as well as in respect to the modes in which the money levied is expended. At present a system of speculation seems established, in too many instances, among those whose province it is to expend the money so levied for the purposes to which the law directs it should be applied. The shameful ex-
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pence of litigations between parishes, respecting the settlement of individual paupers, and the extravagant charge often incurred in transporting them from one parish to another, according to the present system, is often so great, as to add very considerably to the sum total necessary to be levied on the industrious and opulent inhabitants.

The establishment of friendly societies would certainly, as formerly mentioned, be attended with very beneficial consequences; and perhaps, in place of countenancing the industrious labourers in thus providing a fund, whence, in case of accident or old age, they might draw supplies, it might be highly proper to frame a law, whereby labourers of all descriptions should be *compelled* to assign a portion of the fruits of their labour, during the period of their health and strength, in order to establish a fund for their relief, or the relief of their neighbours, when misfortunes overtake them. The establishment of provident societies or clubs, whereby, during the period that the members are in health, and in the vigour of life, they may, by a small weekly payment, make a suitable provision from the fruits of their own industry against the period when sickness, misfortune, or old age and infirmity, shall overtake them, is a measure the more it is known the more it will meet with general approbation.

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By some, provident societies may be thought very remotely, if at all, connected with the subject of British agriculture. To the more intelligent, the best means of providing for the industrious peasantry, whose "rough laborious hand," as it was formerly observed, allows the wealthy to live in indolence and ease, will always be an interesting subject. The more so it must prove, as the suggesting proper measures for that effect, if attended to, will infallibly remove, in a great degree, the load of poor's rates which hangs like a mill-stone about the neck of the English farmers; a load which, if effectual measures be not in a short time adopted to remove, must necessarily be attended with consequences of the most alarming nature, as its weight is increasing with such rapidity, that in a few years it must become altogether insupportable.

"The friendly societies (says a very respectable writer), voluntarily entered into by the industrious poor, have relieved many a worthy character in the times of their sickness, infirmities, misfortunes, and old age, in a more ample and comfortable manner than they would have been provided for by the parish levies. Why may not all the poorer sort in their youth be compelled to provide, out of their industry, for their old age and infirmities? Why may not the poor of every parish be by law created friendly societies? Suppose the master of every

servant and labourer was obliged to retain, out of the wages of each, three-pence a week, and pay the same in the respective names of such servants and labourers into the parish stock. When a servant or labourer removes from one parish to another, he might be entitled to a certificate from the parish he leaves (if he has drawn no pay) of the amount of the sum total he has contributed; and when he has gained a settlement in another parish, that parish might be entitled to draw on the first for the money the pauper has paid; so that every man may draw his fortune after him, which may prevent many a litigation respecting the settlement of the poor, and be a great spur to industry *."

Mr Marshall, in his *Rural Economy of the West of England*, mentions, that several of these valuable institutions have existed in Devonshire for about thirty years; and that their good effects are so evident, that the encouragement of them ought to become a national object of the first magnitude; not more with a view to lessen the present heavy burdens of the poor's rates, than to instil into the lower classes of society a principle of frugality, and a sense of social duties, which these meetings, under suitable regulations, cannot fail of producing.

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* R. B. Anderson's Letter in the *Annals of Agriculture*, vol. ii. p. 4.

As there is perhaps no person in these kingdoms who has devoted more time and attention to the important subject of making a proper provision for the poor of England, without rendering that provision a burden on a portion only of the community (the proprietors and farmers), than Mr Pew of Shaftsbury, the perusal of the general outlines of his plan for the general prevention of poverty, as published in the 7th vol. of the Bath Papers, cannot fail to prove extremely interesting to every humane and judicious reader. After stating, in a letter addressed to Mr Rose of the Treasury (by whom he had been applied to for his opinion regarding friendly societies), that if the collection of a small but voluntary tax upon the sober and industrious citizen (alluding to these societies) for his own use when in distress, be in some degree beneficial, he conceives that the collection of a still smaller, though compulsory, tax upon all ranks of men, the idle, the improvident, and the irresolute, as well as the industrious citizen, for the same purpose, would be a measure as much more beneficial as it is more extensive, he goes on to detail his plan in the following words, viz.

“ Clause I. That a proper officer be appointed for such an extent of district as he may be supposed conveniently to superintend, to take a list of the names and places of abode of all males

above the age of seventeen years, in the same manner as the list is made out for the militia.

II. That every such male pay two-pence per week, and every such female three farthings or one penny per week, into the hands of the above officer, for the purposes hereafter to be specified.

III. The above officer shall be empowered to furnish employment for all such as are willing to work, and who cannot find it for themselves. Whether this officer should be chosen annually in rotation, after the manner of an overseer, or whether he should be a permanent officer upon an adequate salary, will be a matter of future consideration; but if the latter, he should be paid by the community, and not out of the fund.

IV. All the poor being thus sure of employment, the master or mistress for whom they work should be justified in retaining these sums respectively out of their wages; and whether they do so or not, they should (in default of the individual) be answerable to the officer for its payment. All masters and mistresses of families should in like manner be answerable for their servants; and all keepers of lodgings, &c. for their inmates.

V. These sums should be carried weekly to the general treasurer of the *division*, who should give sufficient security for the same.

VI. Out of this fund every male who is real-
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ly incapable of labour should (*by virtue of a certificate from the above officer*) have a right to demand from the treasurer five shillings per week for the first six months, should his illness last so long, and four shillings per week after that period, until he again become capable of labour.

Every female should have a right to demand two shillings and sixpence per week for the first six months, and afterwards two shillings per week, until she be again able to work: she should also be entitled to four weeks full pay at every lying-in. Every male above the age of sixty-five years, whether capable of labour or not, should be entitled to four shilling per week during life. Every female after the same age two shillings.

VII. Any person having three children under nine years of age should be entitled to one shilling and sixpence per week, until the eldest should have attained the age of nine years; and if he has more than three under that age, he should be entitled to one shilling and sixpence per week for each above that number; and if any one or more of his children should happen to be idiotic, insane, or otherwise so far disabled, either in body or mind, as to be utterly incapable of labour, each of them should still be considered as under the age of nine years, and paid for accordingly.

If a mother should be left a widow with three children

children under nine years of age, she should be entitled to receive five shillings ; if with two children, three shillings ; and if with one child, one shilling and sixpence per week ; if with more than three under that age, one shilling per week for each above that number ; it being admitted that all her time is taken up by three, and allowance made for it, but that she is capable of looking after, and taking care of, a greater number. The wives of men serving in the militia, and in the army or navy, should, during the absence of their husbands, be considered and provided for in all respects as widows.

If a child should be left an orphan under nine years of age, two shillings per week should be allowed from the fund for its maintenance ; if more than one of the same family, one shilling and sixpence per week for each above that number. As there is probably no less friendship amongst the lower than amongst the higher orders of society, it would generally happen that some friend or relation of the deceased would gladly take charge of the children, provided they could do so without essential loss to themselves. This regulation would effectually prevent that loss ; and to compensate in some degree for the want of parental affection, sixpence per week more is allowed for the maintenance of an orphan, or a family of orphans, than for a child, or a family of children, who still retain their mother,

mother. If, however, any beings should be so *uncommonly unfortunate* as not to be thus *adopted*, the officer above-mentioned should be obliged to provide a receptacle for them, which he will always be able to do for the sum or sums above-mentioned.

VIII. All children above nine years of age, if in health, should, if they have no parents, or their parents are not able to provide for them, be put out after the manner of parish apprentices.

IX. All persons neglecting or refusing to pay their contribution, should be committed to hard labour in the house of correction for the space of _____.

X. If the fund should at any time fall short of the necessary demands upon it, the deficiency should be made up by a parish rate, collected in the same manner as at present; but without any sense of obligation on the part of the multitude (for there would be *no poor*), who should in all cases receive their relief in the *nature of a demand*.

XI. If the fund (as most probably would happen) should increase beyond the necessary demands upon it, the surplus should on no occasion be diverted to any other purpose than the benefit of the subscribers; but when the price of grain exceeded that which brings it easily within the reach of the multitude (suppose 6s.

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or 6s. 6d. the Winchester bushel), every person who had three children or more under nine years of age should have a right to demand such a sum as, in proportion to the number of his family, would reduce the various necessary articles of life (taking wheat as the standard) to a moderate price; and, indeed, I think in all cases, when the price of grain exceeds that proportion at which the *industrious labourer* can afford to come to market, *sound policy*, as well as *common humanity*, requires that all large families should be entitled to receive such a sum as above specified, although it should be necessary to collect a rate for the purpose.

I need not perhaps add, that every officer entrusted with money should give ample security for his integrity, and the faithful discharge of his duty; that due checks should be established to prevent embezzlement; and that all accounts should be made up and balanced so frequently as to prevent the probability of mistakes.

And still more effectually to secure the complete execution of the plan, it would perhaps be necessary to appoint a general inspector of the funds, who, with the assistance of a few subordinate officers, would probably be able to superintend the whole kingdom."

No apology is requisite for inserting at full length the heads of a plan which, if carried into execution by the legislature, must in its consequences

quences promote most essentially the well-being of the great body of the people, as well as the interests of those concerned in the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of the country. The establishment of friendly or provident societies has, in numerous instances, been found productive of the most salutary effects; and were they as well supported and countenanced in all the counties of Great Britain as they are in that of Monmouth *, where, in consequence of the country gentlemen magnanimously desiring their names may be inrolled in the list of contributing members, every degree of support and countenance is given, compulsory acts of parliament might be rendered unnecessary. But as that mode of conduct, however laudable, will not in all probability be generally adopted, it would certainly be for the interest of all concerned were an act of parliament to be passed framed on the principles so clearly described by Mr Pew.

By such an act, added to the regulations formerly proposed respecting building cottages, the situation of the peasantry and others in the labouring class in this country would be most materially improved; and while the farmers and manufacturers would thereby in time procure an

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* See the Report of the County of Monmouth;

abundant supply of labourers, these would be maintained in sickness and in old age, without those heavy assessments to which, under the present system, the proprietors and farmers are chiefly subjected.

SEC.

SECTION III.

Customary Tenures.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the lands of England is held under lords of manors by copyhold or customary tenure, subject to the payment of fines on the alienation of the property, the death of the lord or of the tenant, and also to the payment of certain yearly rents, and the performance of various services.

That this sort of tenure should be considered not only as a grievance, but also as an obstacle to agricultural improvement, cannot appear surprising, when it is remarked that the lord of the manor is entitled to two years improved value of the copyholds on the death of the copyhold tenant, or on the alienation of the property. Under such circumstances it is not probable that the possessors will be disposed to a liberal expenditure of money on the improvement of lands held by a tenure of this restricted kind.

The services performable by the *proprietors* of copyhold lands in the north-west of England in particular are disgraceful in the extreme, and such as, in a free country, ought to be for ever abolished. They consist of cutting, drying, and

leading the lord's peats, ploughing and harrowing his land, reaping his corn, making his hay, carrying his letters, &c. whenever and how often such services are demanded*. It could not certainly be a matter of much difficulty to arrange general terms, on which copyholders might have it in their power to enfranchise their estates, by payment of a certain sum to the lords of manors for the total abolition of this remain of the feudal system. So far as the writer knows, lords of manors may, as the law now stands, make any arbitrary demand they please on their vassals for the enfranchisement of their lands; and if not complied with, they must remain in the state of slavery above described. Whereas, were an equitable mode established, whereby the copyholder could purchase his independence on reasonable terms, *no Englishman* would continue in a state of bondage, nor would the improvement of the country be obstructed by the arbitrary exactions of the superiors and great landholders.

Manorial rights have been handed down from father to son for many generations: and as by the law of the country the present possessors have

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* If the poorer tenants in the north of Scotland are subjected to such slavish services, they may console themselves with the reflection, that some of their betters, some of the *proprieters* of England, are in a similar situation.

as good a title to exercise these rights as any of their predecessors, it would be unjust to deprive them of that privilege without giving them an equitable compensation ; but when the exercise of these rights stands in the way of improving the national territory, and of supplying the public markets with provisions, it must be deemed impolitic in the legislature to permit them to exist.

It is very generally known, that one great obstacle to improvement arises from a laudable anxiety in the customary tenants to have their little patrimony descend to their children. These small properties (loaded with fines, heriots, and boondays, joined to the necessary expence of bringing up and educating a numerous family) can only be handed down from father to son by the utmost thrift, hard labour, and penurious living ; and every little saving being hoarded up for the payment of the *eventful fine*, leaves nothing for the expence of travelling to see improved modes of culture ; to gain a knowledge of the management and profits of different breeds of stock ; and to be convinced, by ocular proofs, that their own situations are capable of producing similar advantages : and even should they be half inclined to adopt a new practice, prudence whispers, that should the experiment fail, it would require the savings of many years to make good the deficiency. Customary tenures

is allowed on all hands to be a great grievance and check to improvement. Might not this be done away on the division of common rights? The yearly value of the various customs, fines, &c. might be settled by commissioners, and twenty-five, or any reasonable number of years purchase on this yearly value, be the price of the enfranchisement, which might be paid in money, or in land, at the option of the copyhold tenant*.

It is impossible any solid argument can be urged against the propriety of abolishing, without delay, every remain of the feudal system, where it tends, in the smallest degree, to obstruct the general improvement of the country. This may be accomplished with very little trouble. All that appears necessary, in regard to copyhold lands, for instance, is, either to adopt the plan above-mentioned, or to pass one general act of parliament, empowering those who hold their estates only *mediately* of the crown, but *immediately* of a subject superior, to demand of that superior, that, by means of legal proof, he shall ascertain the actual yearly value in money or grain of the fines payable on the alienation of the property, the death of the superior, or lord, or of the copyholder. Where personal services are payable, as casting peats, carrying letters, &c. the

* See the Report of the County of Cumberland.

the value of these should also be ascertained, and the proprietors, so situated, have it in their power to become independent by paying a reasonable number of years purchase, or by making payment annually of the sum thus ascertained to be the value of these fines and services. Were such an arrangement to be made, copyholders would have an inducement to cultivate their lands in the best possible manner; because they, not the superiors, would reap the profits arising from improved cultivation. But people there are who oppose any amendment, because every alteration is a reform. Such people ought, however, to reflect, that alterations and reforms have taken place in all ages, and that it is thereto owing our constitution remains so entire. A custom, which it may not be improper here to mention, as it concerned those who cultivated the soil, was long established in this country, and at last commuted for certain stipulated payments. Our historians assert*, that Evenus III. established an ordinance, whereby a lord of lands was entitled by law to the first night of every bride dwelling on his estate, or imported into it by marriage. This ordinance, after it had continued in force for a considerable period, was at last abolished by Malcom Canmore, who fixed a price at which every man might purchase
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* Buch. lib. 4. c. 21. Spottiswood, p. 29.

to himself and to his bride an exemption from that violation; and which price was paid either in money or cows. A clause, respecting the *Mercheta mulierum* is found in the oldest deeds extant. Boece affirms, that the conversion was exacted and paid among his countrymen in his time; and they are still conveyed in charters granted at present*.

If in the barbarous days of Malcom Canmore this gross ordinance, which may be supposed so congenial to the dispositions of a rude uncivilized people as the feudal barons certainly were, could be commuted by the payment of a stipulated fine, how much more easy would it be in the present times to make an arrangement, whereby all such services as above-mentioned should be for ever abolished? The continuance of such slavish customs must be attributed to the want of attention, not of energy, in the executive government of the country.

* Wallace on Ancient Petrages, p. 56.

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SECTION IV.

The improper Management of the Crown-Lands.

FROM what was formerly stated respecting the crown-lands, and which also applied to those in possession of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the reader is not to learn, that they are neither in that improved state into which they are capable of being put, nor productive to that degree which they might be rendered, were they in possession of private individuals. So far as the writer has seen, he hesitates not to say, that without these lands are *by some means or other improved*, it would be attended with no material bad consequences, in regard to supplying the public-markets with provisions, were the whole of them to be swallowed up by an earthquake. At present they are, as formerly observed, a blot on the map of Great Britain; and as such they are likely to remain till the wisdom of government shall point out a way whereby they can, at a fair market price, become the property of those who would be disposed to expend money, labour, and attention, on the improvement of them. The circumstance of these extensive tracts of improveable land remaining annexed to

the crown, under any change of management that may, while they remain so annexed, be adopted, will always operate as an unsurmountable obstacle to the improvement of them; whereas, were they lotted off and sold in the manner before suggested, these measures would give a spring to the agriculture of the different districts where the crown-lands are situated; and would not only insure the speedy and complete improvement of them, but also of those in the neighbourhood, which are at present allowed to remain in a like waste and neglected state.

SEC.

SECTION V.

Church-Lands.

LANDS held by corporations, whether civil or religious, experience has proved, are in scarcely any instance managed in such a way as to insure their permanent improvement.

“Glebe, or church-lands (says the writer of the Report of the County of Lancaster), or any other appropriated to the support of meeting-houses, and those lands which appertain to small livings, purchased by the bounty of Queen Anne, are generally under a bad state of cultivation; the uncertainty of lease, depending on a contingency of a single life, operating as strong obstacles to any degree of even moderate improvements; and in consequence they are in general under the very worst sort of management.”

This account of the management of church-lands is strictly true when applied to other parts of England as well as to the county of Lancaster. Owing to the depreciation that has of late years taken place in the value of money, it was once the writer's opinion, that an equivalent for tithes ought to be given in property land; as any arrangement founded on money, as a medium by

which the value of the equivalent was to be ascertained in future times, would be rendered very uncertain; whereas the produce of lands, at all times, bears a reference to the value of money at the time*. He is, however, now satisfied, that the mode of arranging the tithes, mentioned in the former part of this chapter, is in every respect superior to any other that can be adopted; and has this advantage, namely, that the lands in the one case remain in the possession of persons whose families have a permanent interest in the improvement of them; whereas, were any part of them given off as glebe-lands, the officiating clergyman, having only a life interest, it could not be supposed that any permanent improvements would be effected by him, or that he would grant such liberal terms to a tenant as would induce him to lay out such sums as were necessary to be expended to render them productive.

The modes of leasing lands, either for a term of twenty-one years, renewable on payment of a fine at the end of every seven, or on one or two lives renewable on the demise of one of the persons named in the lease, on the payment also of an arbitrary fine, as practised by the dignitaries of the church of England, are well known to operate powerfully against the improvement of

* See the Editor's Report of Northamptonshire.

of the church-lands. It is impossible it should be otherwise; for who, in his senses, will think of expending money on the improvement of land, when these very improvements are to operate against himself at the renewal of a lease; which in the one case is limited to seven years, and in the other is held on a very precarious tenure? In the list of those members who compose the Board of Agriculture, we find the names of several bishops. It is hoped, that as a compensation for the spiritual instructions which they will no doubt from time to time instil into the minds of the lay-members, they in return will instruct these right reverend characters in the best methods of letting and managing the church-lands; so that, while the revenues of their successors in office will be greatly increased, their flocks will also be more abundantly fed. Should this, however, not happen, the intervention of the legislature seems indispensably necessary. Such regulations, in regard to leasing the church-lands, ought to be made as would leave the tenants at liberty to expend part of their capitals in the improvement of their farms, without being compelled to pay a ransom at the end of every seven years for the improvements which their own money, labour, and industry, have effected in the intervals.

S E C.

SECTION VI.

Lands held under Deeds of Entail.

As the interests of commerce and manufactures, these darling objects of the executive government of this country, are as deeply affected by the now too generally established practice of entailing estates as those of agriculture, there is every reason to hope that this pernicious custom will not be allowed for any length of time to obstruct the improvement of the British soil. Enough has already been said to prove the evil tendency of this measure, whether the interest of the merchant, the manufacturer, or the possessor for the time is considered *. Besides the loss and inconvenience arising to these various descriptions of people, and that it is at best but a ridiculous, if not an impious, attempt to perpetuate a name, a name perhaps which ought for ever to sink into oblivion, the entailing of estates is attended with consequences extremely prejudicial to the community at large, as operating against the improvement of the country. What inducement can the *chance possessor* of an entailed

* See vol. i. p. 368, &c.

tailed estate have to expend part of his annual revenue on the improvement of a property, which may probably in a few years descend to a person with whom he is but very remotely connected? And how much less inducement still can a tenant on such an estate have to lay out his money or bestow his attention on the improvement of a farm, when it is not in the landlord's power to grant a lease of such duration as to recompense him either for his labour or for the money expended? Whoever will examine into the state of agriculture on an old entailed estate, and compare it with that on one held without any restrictions, will be satisfied of the absurdity of permitting such a practice to be continued. They will be satisfied that the entailed estate is a monument of the entailor's folly, and an evidence of the impolicy of not framing a law to render it impossible for any person to expose himself to posterity by following such an example. Such a law would meet universal approbation; and its effects in Scotland in particular would be such, as must necessarily, and to a very great degree, promote the public weal.

SECTION VII.

Commons and Commonable Rights.

THE rights of commonage as established in England, although productive of no material advantage to the generality of those possessing such rights, operate most powerfully as a bar to the complete improvement of that otherwise fruitful country. Owing to the exercise of these rights by those in possession of them, many hundred thousand acres of naturally productive lands are allowed to remain in a neglected state, which, were they converted into private property, might be rendered to a very high degree productive.

Considering this subject in every way in which it is possible to view it, it will appear unquestionable, that permitting such an extent of lands to continue to be occupied as commons is a national grievance of very great magnitude, and which ought on that account, and at all events, to be removed.

Before improvements in agriculture had made any great progress in Scotland, commons abounded as much in that kingdom as they still do in England. The rights of commonage,

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however, appears to have been somewhat different. In place of every cottager, who possessed a house on the edge of a common, having an unlimited right of commonage, as is now in general the case in England, the proprietors of the adjoining tillage-lands, or their tenants only, had right of pasturing their cattle on the intervening commons in Scotland. Besides, it does not appear that, in the latter kingdom, lords of manors ever exercised their manorial rights so far as to demand, or if so, that they were entitled to, a fourth, an eighth, a twelfth, or a sixteenth of the common for enfranchising the remainder. These circumstances, added to that important one of the payment of tithes in kind, having been previously abolished, and the rights of the clergy ascertained, paved the way for the passing of an act of parliament, whereby proprietors of estates, adjoining to commons in Scotland, acquired a right of forcing a division of commonable land, by a simple and expeditious mode of procedure. This act of parliament, which was passed in the year 1665, is so extremely concise and explicit, that an English reader in particular will feel satisfaction from the perusal of it; and the more so when he is informed that, in the course of 130 years, it has had the effect of rendering all the lands in Scotland property-lands. It is nearly as follows: "All commons, excepting those belonging to the King in property, or royal burghs in

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burgage, may be divided at the instance of any individual having interest, by summons raised against all parties concerned before the lords of session (the supreme court of Scotland), who are empowered to discuss the relevancy, to determine upon the rights of the parties concerned, to divide the same amongst them, and to grant commission for perambulating, and taking all other necessary probation, to be reported to the lords, and the process to be ultimately determined by them. Declaring that the interest of the heritors, having right in the common, shall be estimated according to the valuation of their respective lands and properties; and that a portion be adjudged to each adjacent heritor in proportion to his property, with power to the lords to divide the moor, if any be in the common, among the parties having interest; or in case they cannot be divided, that they remain in common, with free ish and entry whether divided or not."

Strange as it may appear, yet it is no less true than strange, that several people have started objections against an arrangement of common rights in England, and seem to consider any attempts towards it as little less than a violation of the constitution, or at least of those laws by which property in land is held. These objections will be particularly taken notice of, when treating of a subject to which this is very nearly allied, viz. that of Open-field Lands.

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SECTION VIII.

Open-field Lands.

WHEN giving an account of the manner in which the lands in England are employed or occupied, the system of management adopted in the open-field parishes was fully described. From that description, every reader must be satisfied that the open-field lands, which in some counties amount to above one third of the whole, are deficient in point of produce at least one half, when compared with that of inclosed lands under proper management. That open or common field husbandry is therefore an obstruction to agriculture, must be generally allowed; and an obstruction so serious in its nature, as to create a deficiency, on the supposition of there being one fourth part of the tillage-land in England in the open-field state, of at least one eighth of the marketable produce of the country. When this is stated, and when it is further added, that no proprietor or tenant of open-field lands can introduce any improvements in the modes of cropping or of general management, without the consent of the parish community of which he is a member, and none that can be binding up-

on them without an act of parliament, the absurdity of allowing lands to remain in the open-field state must appear still more glaring.

Some facts have been brought to light by means of the Board of Agriculture, which, in proof of these assertions, it may not be improper here to mention. The Report of the County of Buckingham contains the following statement: "About eighteen years ago, the parishioners came to an agreement, and obtained an act, to lay the small pieces of land together. *One farmer, at that period, had eighteen acres in thirty-one different pieces, and at wide distances from each other.* When the division took place, the balks were of necessity ploughed up, by which a great portion of the sheep pasture was destroyed. It became then expedient, and it was agreed upon at a public vestry, to sow clover and turnips as a *succedaneum* for the balks. Two years since (that is, sixteen years after this arrangement had taken place among the parishioners), one of the farmers, occupying sixteen acres of these common fields, procured in the month of May a large flock of lean sheep, which he turned on the clover crops, being then nearly in bloom, the greater part of which they devoured *," Another instance of the impossibility

* This unprincipled act will, in its ultimate consequences, promote the interest of those whom it was meant to injure ;

lity of parishioners being able to arrange any mode by which improvements can be introduced, which individuals are bound to adhere to without the sanction of parliament, is also detailed in the same report, and in the following words: "The parish of Steeple Claydon contains two thousand five hundred acres of strong wet clay. The custom is here, to have one crop and one fallow. About fourteen years ago the proprietors came to an agreement to have two crops and a fallow; but before the expiration of ten years, one of the farmers broke through the agreement, and turned in his cattle among the crops of beans, oats, and barley: in which plan he was soon followed by the rest of his neighbours; and the crops on that part of the field, which, agreeable to the ancient custom, would have been fallow, were in consequence totally destroyed." Considering the immense national loss arising from so great a portion of the cultivated and cultivateable lands in England remaining in the open-field and commonable state, the great additional expence which farmers are liable to in cultivating lands dispersedly situated, and the inferiority of crops reaped from

as the other proprietors, with a view of preventing such abuses for the future, have applied to parliament for leave to enclose the whole; and which has been, or no doubt will soon be, obtained.

from lands, however good in quality, that are subjected to a never-ending rotation of corn crops, it is no wonder that the report of every county in that kingdom should contain an earnest solicitation to the members of the Board of Agriculture, to suggest such measures as are most likely to receive the sanction of the legislature, and to meet the approbation of all the parties concerned for removing obstacles, which, while they are permitted to exist, must exclude the possibility of improving the agriculture of that country.

To arrange general equitable principles, on which manorial rights can be purchased, and commons divided and rendered private property, and on which likewise proprietors of parishes shall be at liberty to inclose, and introduce new and better modes of husbandry on their estates, are subjects of infinite importance to the future prosperity of England; and as such call loudly for the immediate intervention of the legislature.

After stating and obviating the objections which have been started against the dividing of commons and the inclosing of parishes, and after pointing out the advantages that experience has in many instances proved to have resulted from adopting these means of improvement, the writer shall beg leave to suggest what to him appears the most probable way in which they can be generally introduced.

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The depopulation of the country, which is supposed a necessary consequence of divisions of commons, or inclosing of parishes, is held out as a grand objection against the general adoption of either of these measures. The fact, however, it appears from the Agricultural Reports, is quite the contrary; and to those who attempt to argue against facts, it is unnecessary to make any reply. Can those measures tend to the depopulation of the country which have for their object the production, in greater abundance, of the means by which an increased population can be supported? Has not every farmer the power of cultivating his land to greater advantage when inclosed, or in severalty, than when intermixed with that of others? Can any farmer cultivate his farm to the greatest possible advantage without more than ordinary labour? Does not this necessarily require an additional number of labourers? To all these questions the answers must certainly be in the affirmative. It may be admitted, that the inhabitants of a parish must undergo a very material alteration in their situation in consequence of its being inclosed; yet it does not follow that the depopulation of the country must be the consequence. Though several of those who occupy small farms must necessarily be removed, in order to enable the proprietors to class the lands into farms of a proper size, it is equally obvious, that

that a new set of people must be introduced; such as hedgers, ditchers, road-makers, and labourers of every sort. This may therefore be called an alteration in the description of the inhabitants, a shifting of population from one parish to another, rather than an expulsion, or a decrease of the number of inhabitants in one particular parish. Were it evident, however, that depopulation was the consequence of inclosing a parish, it will be found, that that depopulation does not arise from the circumstance of the parish having been inclosed, but from the total alteration of system that too commonly takes place in the after management of the lands. If the lands, in place of being laid down to grass, as is the prevailing practice, were cultivated in an alternate course of grain and grass husbandry, the number of hands necessary for the cultivation, and for carrying on and following out the various improvements which in such a case would be immediately introduced, would be at least equal, if not greatly superior, to that of the inhabitants at any period while it remained in the common or open field state.

The next objection against the adoption of either of these measures is, the depriving the commoners of their rights of commonage. This philanthropic argument is apt, with the man of humanity, like Aaron's rod, to swallow up every other that can be urged in favour of the public, or

of the other individuals concerned. But let us pause a moment, and inquire what these rights are. It is presumed, after the most minute inquiry, it will be found that the rights of commonage in England were, as in Scotland, vested originally in the proprietors of the adjoining tillage lands; and that the now claimants of rights of commonage have acquired these rights, such as they are, in almost every instance, through the negligence of the actual proprietors, who allowed these assumed rights to acquire the sanction of law, in consequence of prescription. That this is the origin of common-rights in England, and that they are more common on the crown-lands, arising from the cause now assigned, "negligence," will not, the writer dares venture to assert, be denied. But they are rights; and "curst be he that removes his neighbour's land mark," is a maxim that ought to be imprinted on the mind of every man. It does not, however, thence follow, that, to accommodate those possessing rights of common, the public, or the principal proprietors, who would be benefited by a division, should sacrifice their interest, should allow the productive powers of these uncultivated wastes to remain dormant, because it is the inclination of those who have thus acquired rights that they should do so; far less does it follow, that, whether these rights have been acquired through legal indisputable title, or

through the sufferance of the proprietors of the adjoining estates, the owners of them cannot, on the division of a common, get a full and fair equivalent in property land for their rights of commonage. Whoever would maintain this doctrine, would maintain that the laws of England were framed for the protection of the rights of the rich, but that the poor had no interest in them. The advantages derived by the cottagers, in virtue of these rights, are for the most part merely ideal; yet if ever a division of the commons in England takes place, it will, for the reasons formerly mentioned, become the indispensable duty of the commissioners acting in such cases, both in point of humanity and sound policy, to act liberally towards the cottager, and to give him an adequate allowance of property land for his prescriptive rights. Commissioners so acting ought to consider, that in a national view, whether A, B, or C are the proprietors of these commonable lands is a matter of no sort of importance, provided they are once put in the train of improvement; and which can only be done by converting them into property. These commissioners ought farther to consider, that scarcely any sum of money which they can award is an adequate compensation for a cottager's right of common. The money may be soon dissipated; but rights of pasturage, or lands in property, are funds more permanent in their natures.

When

When a poor cottager receives a piece of money in compensation for his rights of commonage, which is but too frequently the case under parish inclosure bills, the funds which were allotted for the support of his family are, as it were, set afloat; and it is a thousand to one if they shall again settle on any friendly shore. It cannot, therefore, be too often repeated, that there is no compensation a cottager can receive for his rights of commonage so just and equitable, or to him and his family so beneficial, as land in property.

Another objection to inclosing parishes, or to a division of commons, is the expence of the act of parliament necessary to carry either of these measures into effect; and when completed, to make the arrangement binding upon the parties. This has been particularly taken notice of when describing the state of the roads in Great Britain. It is certainly mortifying to a proprietor of England, that he can scarcely adopt any plan for improving his estate without paying some hundred pounds to the clerks of parliament for doing nothing but registering the edicts of the legislature; and for doing which, if they are not properly paid from the public funds, they at least ought to be, so as to prevent them from levying a heavy tax on the more enterprising, public-spirited, and praise-worthy individuals of the community. Let litigious people, when they

make appeals to the supreme tribunal of the nation, pay what the avarice of the official people may dictate; but let every application for the interposition of the legislative authority to sanction measures calculated to promote the prosperity and improvement of the country, be laid before Parliament without fee or reward.

The only other objection that shall be mentioned is, that if all the open-fields and improveable commons were brought into a proper state of cultivation, it would materially affect the interest of the owners of the already improved lands. Such a narrow-minded sentiment ought to be treated with silence and contempt, did it not prove, that those who are capable of suggesting it were satisfied that, however much individuals might suffer, the interest of the nation at large would be promoted, were every improveable acre in the island in a proper state of cultivation. This being granted, it may be asked, ought the interest of the public to be sacrificed to promote that of a few individuals? But no apprehensions need be entertained on that account. Although "trifles light as air" seem with such reasoners to have the weight of "words of holy writ", yet the judicious and intelligent must be convinced, that while the commerce of Britain keeps on in a progressive state, there is no extent of superabundant produce that can be raised

raised in the island which will not meet a ready sale in some foreign market.

With respect to the advantages to be derived from a general division of the commons, and the inclosure of the open-field parishes in England, although they are numerous, the most important of them only shall be mentioned.

It is only in these countries where the means of subsistence can be had in abundance, and on reasonable terms, that population increases with rapidity. In political calculations the riches of a state are estimated by the number of its inhabitants. As these cannot increase to any considerable degree where the means of subsistence are limited, it is evident, that by adopting the measures above-mentioned, by which only a great addition can be made to the national stock of provisions, the state would become richer, as it would then be able to furnish from its own lands the means of supporting an increased population. Besides, were these measures adopted, it is obvious that the national territorial revenue would be to an immense degree augmented; that of England, in all probability, one-third at least beyond what it is at present.

The following extract from the writer's Report of the County of Northampton will tend to elucidate this fact: "The average rent of an acre of open-field land in this district, including the value of the tithes, which may be rec-

koned at three shillings and sixpence the acre, may amount to eleven shillings and sixpence; while that of an acre of inclosed land (including a similar sum for tithes) may be reckoned twenty shillings, which makes a difference of eight shillings and sixpence the acre. There are eighty-nine parishes in this county in the open-field state, which may contain nearly 150,000 acres. The rent which the proprietors therefore lose, by keeping these parishes in the open-field state, may be estimated at upwards of L 60,000 a-year; while at the same time the introduction of agricultural improvements is precluded, and consequently an increase of rent on rational principles."

Besides an increase of population, of the quantity and quality of grain, and of territorial revenue, the improvement of the different species of live-stock is another advantage which uniformly results from inclosing land. The farmer, no longer under the necessity of mixing his herds or his flocks with those of others, is at liberty to pursue such measures as he judges most expedient; and while he purchases tups, bulls, and stallions of the best sorts, to improve his stock, he also takes care, by superior cultivation, and a more judicious rotation of cropping than he was before at liberty to adopt, that they shall not be stinted in their growth by the want of provender.

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Such is the account of the advantages that are likely to result from a general division of commons and the inclosure of open-fields, which the writer, from a careful perusal of the agricultural reports of the different counties of England, and his own general knowledge of the subject, is able to lay before the reader. Experience having proved, in very many instances, that these, and several others of no inconsiderable importance, have actually resulted, it must appear surprising that any peer of parliament should stand up in his place and maintain an opposite doctrine; yet whoever peruses the Parliamentary Register for 1781, will find that this was the case.

Lord Bathurst, in the beginning of that year, like a real patriot and friend of his country, gave notice in the house of peers, that he intended to make several propositions, in a committee of the whole house, on the subject of inclosures and the commutation of tithes. When these propositions were submitted to the consideration of that respectable assembly, the Bishop of Landaff, now a member of the Board of Agriculture, asserted, that without regard to the waste of land taken up in fences, &c. or of the expence of forming them, that inclosures were unfavourable to agriculture, and to the cultivation and produce of grain: That the crops in inclosures were subject to blights and mildews, as the trees in the hedge-rows excluded the sun
and

and obstructed the air; That trees and hedges were apt to generate vermin, and many evils of a similar nature; whereas, in open-fields the crops were free from any such attacks, and therefore found to be always more in quantity, and superior in quality, to those in inclosed lands. Although almost every report, presented to the Board of Agriculture by the persons employed to make the surveys of the different counties in England, states, in the most decided terms, the advantage of inclosing; yet, in consequence of such arguments as these, this patriotic lord was obliged to withdraw his motion for a committee of the house. Were all the members of the Board of Agriculture to hold the same sentiments on the subject of inclosing open-fields which this Right Reverend Prelate promulgated on the occasion above-mentioned, it would augur ill as to the fate of the bill introduced into the last parliament by their respectable president. But it is hoped the contrary will be found to be the case; and that, by the exertions of that Honourable Board, such of the proprietors of England as are now in a state of thralldom, owing to these ancient laws and customs being continued in force, will be completely emancipated, and left at liberty to adopt, without controul, the most effectual measures for the improvement of their private property; which, by the bye, it is impossible for them to effect,

effect, without at the same time promoting the public interest.

To the nature of the bill above alluded to the writer is an entire stranger; but it does not occur to him that, without effecting arrangements with the parties to be most materially affected by its establishment, it is ever likely to meet general approbation, or indeed to pass into a law. To introduce a bill into parliament with effect, that is intended to facilitate either a general inclosure or a general division of commonable lands, several previous important steps are necessary to be taken. The clergy, the lords of manors, including the crown and those possessing common rights, although their interests are separate, and in some degree opposite to each other, must all be materially interested in the fate of such a bill. Had a commutation of tithes been effected, the terms on which manorial rights, whether royal or private, could have been purchased, ascertained, and the proper mode of allocating property-land, in place of rights of commonage, determined. A general inclosure bill would have passed without opposition, *because no private party would have had right to oppose it*; but the person who proposes passing a general inclosure bill, without these previous arrangements, must expect to encounter a host of foes; and if these should prove too powerful, as will in all probability be the case, the period

may yet be far distant when this stable foundation for the general agricultural improvement of England can be laid. The president and the other members of the Board of Agriculture, if they have any serious intention of bringing forward a general inclosure bill, will therefore do well to make the necessary previous arrangements. Should they inconsiderately adopt an opposite line of conduct, the consequences will neither be honourable to themselves nor advantageous to the community.

SEC.

SECTION IX.

Thirlage to Mills.

THE erection of water-mills for grinding corn must no doubt have been considered in Scotland, at the period when all sorts of grain were converted into meal by means of hand-mills of very imperfect construction, as a great improvement. When water-mills were first erected, two or more neighbouring proprietors usually became bound that their tenants should pay to the proprietor who erected the mill, and to his heirs and successors for ever, a certain portion of the grain carried to the mill for the trouble of manufacturing the remainder; and further, that neither they nor their tenants should be at liberty to manufacture any of their corns at other mills, without paying the accustomed malture for the corns so abstracted from that particular mill. This was perhaps the only method that could have been devised at the time, by which water-mills could have been generally erected. These arrangements did not probably operate as a heavy burden on the proprietors or farmers who first subjected themselves to such obligations, as at that period the cultivation of grain was comparatively very

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limited. Besides, it may be reasonably inferred that the work was much better performed by these mills of modern invention, and with much greater advantage to the owner of the corn, than by those that were formerly in use. The increase of population, and consequently of tillage lands, has, however, rendered that which, at its establishment, was very likely an equitable arrangement, now a very heavy tax on many farmers, and extremely harassing to all who are subjected to such bondage.

As nothing is a greater spur to industry than a free and unlimited disposal of its fruits to the best advantage; so, on the other hand, nothing can discourage it more than restrictions and limitations which become real fetters upon industry. In consequence of this servitude, the tenant cannot carry his corns to market when a good price offers; he must necessarily carry them to the mill to which he is thirled to be grinded, and where they are subjected to a very severe tax under the name of multure. This tax at some mills amounts to a twentieth, at others to a fifteenth, and at some to a tenth, part of the whole; besides which they must satisfy the under millers or servants for their trouble. Temptation is a great enemy to honesty; and although it would be extremely improper to impute blame to all, or to a majority of the farmers of mills in Scotland; yet, if common sense is to

be credited, the opportunities which the miller and his servants have to commit frauds sometimes lead them beyond the limits of strict justice; sometimes lead them, according to the old proverb, to "multure twice." In short, this servitude, so harassing in its nature, has been long felt and loudly complained of, but hitherto without redress, except in some particular instances where the holders of such rights have, from motives of patriotism, commuted them for a fair equitable consideration in money. Without any violation of private property, it would be easy for the legislature to fix an equitable rule, by which the proprietors of lands, thirled to particular mills, should have it in their power to purchase the right of grinding the corns growing on their estates at any mill they please, or of selling them, before they were converted into meal, as best suited their interest or that of their tenants*.

It does not appear that this species of servitude is at all known in England, at least none of the agricultural reports of that kingdom make any mention of it. That of the County of Wilts takes notice of water-mills as being in many instances exceedingly injurious to water-meadows; and in the same report the following remedy is suggested: "In all acts of parliament for inclosures,

* See the Scots Farmer, vol. i. p. 297

tures, where there is a possibility of making water-meadows, or of improving those already made, power should be given to the commissioners to take from the mills, at stated times, all or such part of the water as should be absolutely necessary for the water-meadows below; and where such mills are really unnecessary, to direct them to be taken away. Such commissioners being at the same time empowered to fix an annual rent-charge, to be paid to the owners of such mills so injured by the owners of the land so benefited, as is done in the case of canals, subject to the like appeal as is allowed in canal acts. In parts of the country which are already inclosed, disputes frequently happen between owners of mills and owners of water-meadows, and which are almost impossible to be explained or understood in a court of justice. Perhaps a mode might be practicable, of empowering justices of the peace, at their quarter-sessions, to order a reference to men of judgment in the neighbourhood, and to make their award matter of record to bind the parties.²²

Mr Marshall, in his *Rural Economy of the West of England*, also makes mention of the ancient rights of water-mills being bars to the improvement of that part of the country, by preventing the watering of meadows. If the watering of land shall be found a beneficial practice in Scotland, the immense number of water-

water-mills in that kingdom must necessarily prove an unsurmountable bar to the general introduction of it; and if ever the period shall happen when the legislature shall turn its attention to the removal of thirlage as a grievance on the farmers of that country, it may be highly proper to keep in view the possibility of improving the lands adjoining to the mill-leads or water courses, by means of watering or flooding them at pleasure.

SEC

SECTION X.

The Game-Laws.

THESE operate powerfully against the farmer; they give to a few opulent individuals a power of doing mischief, *which the legislators of no country have a right to dispense*, and which in this is found to be a real grievance. What right has His Grace, My Lord, Sir John, or the Squire, to gallop over this field of new sown wheat, or that field of cole, or of turnips, the property of another? The answer is, He is warranted by law. True; but will any person pretend to deny that such laws are made for the *destruction*, not the *protection*, of private property? The practice of hunting is very injurious to farmers; the winter corn in wet situations, and turnips in all, are often much damaged by the horses; the fences are also broken, and gates left open; whereby different species of stock get mixed together, and in numerous instances commit trespasses*. It is well known that sportsmen pay no regard to fences, or to crops of any kind; and if a farmer, who suffers material injury from the commission

* See the Report of the North Riding of Yorkshire.

mission of such depredations dares to complain, especially if he is a tenant at will, his removal is the consequence; at any rate, he is branded with the character of a turbulent fellow. And why? Because, while he sees a number of men on horseback doing an act of manifest injustice, committing devastation on his property, which in this case the law of the land does not protect, he dares to remonstrate against proceedings which ought not to be tolerated in any country where it is the boast of the inhabitants that laws are enacted sufficient for the protection of individual property. It was stated by the chancellor of the exchequer, towards the close of the last parliament, that the game-laws of this country were subjects of the most delicate nature, and on that account ought to be as little agitated as possible. They were no doubt felt as a real grievance by the great body of the people in a neighbouring country, and tended, along with other grievous circumstances, to bring on that dreadful catastrophe which has recently happened. It would therefore be prudent in the executive government of these kingdoms to make such alterations as would render the game-laws less exceptionable; that would prevent the possibility of private property being injured under the sanction of law. For it must be universally acknowledged, that any law that gives to A the power of demolishing the proper-

ty of B is unjust in its principle, and oppressive and grievous in its consequences: and that this is the case, in regard to the game-laws, is a fact that there is scarcely a farmer in the island who cannot, from woeful experience, attest.

Such are the obstacles to the improvement of the country, which cannot be removed without the intervention of the legislature. Of these the following more particularly affect England:

1st, The payment of tithes in kind.

2^{dly}, The poor's laws, whereby the merchant, the manufacturer, and the moneyed men, are exempted from paying a due proportion of the expence necessary for supporting those who have grown old, or who have met with accidents, in their service.

3^{dly}, Customary tenure, by which the holders of particular estates are not only in some instances subjected to the performance of degrading services, but in consequence of being liable in the payment of eventual fines (which rise in proportion to the improvements that have been made), they are rendered less attentive to the due cultivation of their property.

4^{thly}, The crown-lands, which under the existing circumstances, are of no value to the country; but which, if sold and converted into private property, as they are capable of very great improvement, would in time furnish immense additional supplies to the public markets.

5^{thly},

5thly, Church-lands, and lands in possession of corporations, whether civil or religious. The holders of such lands require to be laid under legal restrictions in regard to granting leases, so that those who farm them may have a more permanent interest in the improvements which, by the expenditure of labour and money, they may have effected.

6thly, Commons and common rights are great nuisances, as preventing the improvement of numerous extensive tracts of otherwise very improveable land.

7thly, Open-field lands. One of the greatest bars to the improvement of England, and which cannot be removed till the proprietors of estates so situated shall acquire a legal right to compel a division and arrangement, on such principles as to enable each to introduce modes of improvement independent of the others.

8thly, The game-laws. These ought to be new-modelled, in so far at least as to secure private and individual property.

The obstacles which affect the agriculture of Scotland are few, and being less complex than many of those before stated, the legislature could find little difficulty in removing.

1st, The now too common practice of entailing estates; by which means the holders, in place of being independent proprietors, anxious for the improvement of their paternal properties,

are reduced to the state of liferenters, regardless in general of the improvement of estates which may in a generation or two devolve on a different series of heirs ; and precluded by the tenor of the deeds under which they hold from granting leases on such liberal terms as to induce substantial and spirited farmers to undertake improvements.

2dly, Thirlage to mills is a grievance both loudly and generally complained of, but which might be easily abolished, and on the most equitable terms, viz. on payment of a reasonable number of years purchase of what shall be proved to be the value of such servitude.

3dly, The game-laws, which, owing to the general lateness of the harvest, and that partridge-shooting commences so early, are attended with more harassing circumstances there than in England.

From this review of the legal bars that obstruct the agricultural improvement of this island, how enviable does the situation of the proprietors and farmers in Scotland appear beyond that of those in England? The free and uncontrouled command of their estates, which the Scotch proprietors (those only excepted who hold under deeds of entail) possess, gives them ample opportunities of adopting every measure that prudence dictates as likely to tend towards the improvement of their property, and which those particularly

particularly who possess lands south of the Grampian mountains have for some years evinced the most laudable disposition to adopt. While the farmers, exempted from the payment of tithes in kind, of excessive poor's rates, and having complete command of the farms, which they possess without constant appeals to parish meetings, may, and in general do, cultivate them in peace, and in a manner the most conducive to their own and to the public interest.

These obstacles to the improvement of both kingdoms, some of which are extremely serious, and so complicated in their nature as must render it difficult to remove them, have naturally grown out of that change in the circumstances of all worldly things which is perpetually, but imperceptibly, taking place; whereby regulations and laws, that might very probably have been highly proper at the periods when they were framed and enacted, have in the course of time become real grievances, and such as operate most powerfully, not only against the general improvement of the country, but also against the peace, comfort, and well-being, of society. It must therefore be admitted by every impartial person as highly improper in any government to adhere to systems of police beyond the period when a strict adherence to them is useful to the community, far less when the doing so is evidently attended with pernicious consequences. It would

certainly be more wise and becoming in the legislators of every country to watch the changes that take place in the manners of mankind, and in the order of things; and to guard, by gradual alterations of the existing laws, in time against subjecting the state to any violent shock or convulsion. They ought to attend to what Lord Bacon very judiciously observes, "Time (says his Lordship) is the greatest innovator; and if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and council shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end? A froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation, and they that reverence too much old times are but a scorn to the new."

Reform, or, as Lord Bacon styles it, innovation, is in these times, the writer well knows, an opprobrious term. In questions merely political the friends and enemies of reform may battle as they please; but he considers it a duty which every man writing on the subject of British agriculture owes to that community of which he is a member, to point out such alterations of the existing laws as appear indispensably necessary, in order, not only to effect the further improvement of the country, but in order also to procure that supply of the necessaries of life within itself; without which the inhabitants cannot exist, unless through a constant, although a precarious, dependence on foreign nations.

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SECTION XI.

Obstacles in the Power of Proprietors to Remove.

It has been made evidently to appear, not only in the former sections of this chapter, but also in the preceding part of this volume, that there are many obstacles which, without the interposition of the legislature, must ever remain obstacles to the general improvement of the country. There are others also, and some of them productive of very bad consequences, which the proprietors have in their power to remove. These shall be explained in the following pages.

The want of leases, as being most generally complained of, first demands notice; and under that general head may be included every particular which requires the landlord's attention in regard to those obstacles that fall to their share individually to remove. There are scarcely any of the Agricultural Reports of England or Wales in which the want of leases is not stated as next to the payment of tithes in kind, the greatest grievance which the generality of farmers labour under. This complaint, it is true, does not hold good against the proprietors,
of

of Scotland in general ; nevertheless there are numerous instances, particularly in the northern provinces, where proprietors withhold from their tenants that permanent security of possession, by granting which alone the lands can be most expeditiously and most substantially improved *.

Here

* While the great proprietors of the north of Scotland continue the practice of raising regiments at the commencement of every war, it is not to be supposed they will ever act so absurd a part as to enter into arrangements with their tenants whereby they can acquire any share of independence. Such arrangements would operate materially against their interests ; for they can make more in some years of the gleanings of the men on their estates than by the sale of the produce of the soil, had they a right to bring the whole to market. We are frequently told at the commencement of a war, that a proprietor in the north of Scotland raised a regiment of fine young volunteers in the course of a week or ten days. Every reader may infer what means were used to effect this business so quickly, especially in a country where the use of arms is in a great measure unknown. Were it asked, What becomes of this devoted race ? The answer would be, They are sold to the British Minister, not indeed as a *free-born German Prince* would do, at so much *per head*, but at so much *per annum* ; that is, the laird and the laird's cousins become captains, majors, colonels, generals, &c. *Thrice happy country, may not an Englishman exclaim, where such characters bear sway ! How flourishing must be its trade and manufactures ? How improved its agriculture ?*

Here it may be right to remark, that there are two descriptions of landholders whom, owing to the circumstances in which they are placed, it would be improper to include as liable to the general censure, that every thinking person will readily agree is applicable to those who, acting as free agents, yet continue to hold their tenants in a state of dependence little short of what took place during the existence of the feudal system. Those who may be from time to time in possession of the lands that have been assigned to the church in frankalmoign, or free alms, are either from long established custom, or existing laws, the writer knows not which, prevented from granting leases of proper endurance, or on such terms as can prevent the tenants from being compelled at short intervals to pay in advance of rent a very heavy tax on their former industry. In either case, however, although the accidental holders of such lands are not blameable in this respect, yet the intervention of the legislature, if the complete improvement of the country be with it a desirable object, seems indispensably necessary. The holders of these lands for the time, ought not only to be empowered, but enjoined, to grant leases of such duration as to enable the farmers to reap the returns that may be fairly expected from the expenditure of such sums as are in common necessary for effecting the introduction of improved modes of husbandry.

dry. "For (in the words of the writer of the Essex Report) as the clergy are now circumstanced, no permanent improvements are attempted; the land lies half cultivated, and seems in almost every parish, by the unexampled poverty of its appearance, to plead for better treatment."

The other description of landholders that ought to be exempted from any blame arising from the dependent state of their tenantry, are those who possess entailed estates; they are in many instances as dependent as their tenants, holding on their own lives only, and galled, probably through a great part of life, with the mortifying reflection, that at their death a numerous family of daughters, who, when their patrimony is compared with the station in which they were educated, are to be left in a state of indigence.

The writer is aware that this subject has been already twice under review. It is introduced here with a view of obviating an objection, which those who favour this remain of the feudal system may be apt to urge against the general and unqualified censure which he has bestowed upon the practice of entailing estates. It may be urged by some, that an act of parliament was passed some years ago for enlarging the powers of those holding entailed estates in Scotland, whereby they were not only empowered to grant leases of longer endurance than the original entailer had determined to be the rule of his successor's conduct, but also, that
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those holders who expended money on the permanent improvement of such estates, when done according to the rules, and under the limitations expressed in that act, should have a title to devise to their younger children, or to their heirs at law, a portion of the money so expended, and which was by that act made recoverable from the heir of entail. Some beneficial consequences have unquestionably resulted from the passing of this act, as since that period leases of entailed lands have in many instances been procured on more liberal terms, in point of endurance, than was previously thereto practicable. But in few instances have proprietors of this description expended money with any degree of liberality on the improvement of their estates, and in fewer still have they taken the proper measures to substantiate, in terms of the act above alluded to, the manner in which such money has been expended, so that any others, excepting the heir of entail, could reap the benefit. In short, as they have not themselves a permanent interest in the property, it is not to be expected they will take much trouble to secure to their tenants that which, without an alteration of the law, they cannot obtain to themselves. Nor are they in any degree blameable. A man that has been for several years confined in chains, becomes so habituated to the galling yoke as to consider it rather an appendage of his dress than an incum-

brance which he is compelled to submit patiently to drag along.

In particular instances, it must be admitted, circumstances sometimes do occur, wherein it would be wrong for proprietors, or those acting for them, to lease estates, however completely they may possess the power of doing so. It may, in many cases, be improper, for instance, to lease the estate of a minor when nearly come of age, and equally so when there is an immediate view of the estate being sold; but these particular cases do not apply to the subject in general.

It is well known that lands let on leases of moderate endurance (21 years, for instance) give in common 25 *per cent.* of more rent than those of the same quality held from year to year. The proprietors, who are in the uncontrolled management of their estates, ought therefore to consider that the want of leases operates as an insurmountable bar to the general introduction of improvements, or to carrying on the various operations of agriculture with spirit and effect. That man would certainly be justly subjected to the reproach of being rash and inconsiderate in his conduct, who would expend money and labour on the improvement of any farm, where his certainty of continuance does not entitle him to look forward with a confident assurance to the period when his exertions were to be rewarded. It is a well known fact, that the hope of reward
sweetens

sweetens labour; take that away, and the spur to labour necessarily ceases. It is that alone that calls forth industry, and is the spring of all exertion. What object then can a farmer have to hazard his capital, and devote the most vigorous and active part of his life to the improvement of a farm which he holds on no more certain tenure than the will, or, in other words, than the whim or caprice of his landlord? In every such situation, the *prudent* farmer must be restrained from any spirited expenditure, however much he may be satisfied that the improvements, which might thereby be effected, would, under other circumstances, prove beneficial to the public, the landlord, and himself. Have not, it may again be asked, instances occurred, where tenants so circumstanced have been obliged *repeatedly* to agree to pay an advance of rent rather than remove; while, from the uncertainty of the tenure on which they held their farms, they were debarred from making those exertions which an advance of rent demanded, and which almost uniformly take place in such cases when leases are granted? The writer knows they have*.

“ We have heard (say the very intelligent reporters of the State of Agriculture of the County of Cumberland), it is true, some arguments

* See his Report of Northamptonshire.

ments urged in favour of letting no leases, which we are persuaded cannot long take hold of any liberal and benevolent mind, enlightened by science, or anxious to promote the true interests of the country." What these are these gentlemen have not detailed. They are, however, well known to the writer; and, without entering into a minute discussion of particulars, one only, as being that which he has heard most frequently urged, shall be mentioned; namely, "that granting leases tends to render the farmers not only independent but sometimes insolent." How absurd! Do such reasoners suppose, that because a man acquires, by being in possession of a lease, a more independent mode of thinking or of acting, that he becomes the worse farmer or member of society? The very reverse will uniformly be found the case. By acquiring a permanent interest in his farm, he has every incentive to become a good farmer; and his being so renders him of course more independent in point of fortune: that being the case, he is naturally led to be more and more anxious for the support and preservation of that constitution, and of that system of government, by which the property so acquired can be best protected. View, on the other hand, the situation of these (a great majority of the farmers in Great Britain) who hold their farms at the will of their landlords; and then let it be asked which of the

two descriptions of tenants, those who have or those who have not leases, are likely to be the most useful, and in every point of view the best members of the community?

It has been often said, that the liberty enjoyed by the farmer, and the security afforded by the constitution to his property, were the principal causes why agriculture flourished more in this island than in other nations. Let us inquire wherein consists the liberty enjoyed by the farmer who sits without a lease? His words and actions are under the most absolute subjection to another, who carries along with him a never-failing argument upon all occasions. Let the abject situation of such a man, placed under a capricious landlord, be considered; his best actions may be misinterpreted, he is exposed to every indignity without daring to complain; or if the spirit of a man gets up in him, what security does the constitution afford to his situation? If he has made improvements, the fruits of them are wrested from him by an arbitrary removal; another farm cannot always be got, and he may be turned upon the wide world without the hopes of redress. A prudent man will reflect upon these things, and if he be so critically situated, will often rather part with his natural rights than expose himself to misery. He may have a numerous family; his farm may be doing well with him; he may have contracted an affection

for his native soil, and be uncertain, if he makes a change, how he is next to be put up. This picture might be still higher coloured; but from the above it may be contended, that the want of a lease precludes the farmer from acting as a free agent, and renders his property insecure and precarious*.

It would be extremely desirable to ascertain the period which the British farmers, throwing their joint interests as it were into one common stock, have in regard to permanency of possession. This it is impossible to do with any degree of accuracy; but in order, in some measure, to elucidate the point, the following statement, which on investigation might probably be found near the truth, is submitted to the reader's review:

Three-fifths of the land-rent of Great Britain may be supposed paid by tenants holding at the will of their landlords; that is, for		$\frac{1}{2}$ year.
One-fifth by tenants, the original endurance of whose leases was for 7 and 14 years—medium		$10\frac{1}{2}$ years.
Carried over		11 years.
		Brought

* See the Agricultural Report of the West-Riding of Yorkshire.

Brought over 11 years.
 One-fifth by those who hold leases,
 that from the commencement en-
 dure* - 19 years.

Divide by 5 - 30

Average term of endurance 6 years.

By this statement, surprising as it may appear, and however fortunately some individuals may be situated in respect to their enjoying by lease a more permanent interest in the lands they possess, yet the great body of the British farmers have not, on a medium, and on the most favourable view of the subject, above six years in which they can look forward with security to reap a return for money expended, or labour bestowed, in improving the British soil. If, again, allowance is made for a great proportion of the existing leases being nearly in whole, or at least in part, expired, four years may be nearer the general average. In no event is it probable, that the farmers of these kingdoms, as a body, have

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* There are some instances of leases on lives in England that continue in force for a much longer period. In Scotland also there are some estates and farms let for two, and a few for three times nineteen years. But these instances are not numerous enough to be brought into so general a statement, nor would they make any material difference in the result if they were.

a legal conventional right to retain possession of their farms for five years. If so, and that the improvement of the country is looked for at their hands, it follows, that this useful and industrious class of men are to expend their capitals, to devote their time and attention, and to use every possible exertion in introducing improvements, and new and better modes of husbandry, on a lease of five years duration. Yet this is actually the case; for although, as has been remarked before, a certain proportion of the British farmers enjoy leases framed on more liberal principles, the above, in a national view, is the deduction that falls to be made from the preceding statement.

This perhaps may be deemed a new mode of calculating the duration of leases, or the extent of period in which the farmers can be supposed to have interest in the improvements they make on the national territory; but there is perhaps no better method by which the absurdity of the conduct of a majority of those proprietors, who may be fairly said to have a will of their own, could have been made at once so clear, nor any by which the dependent state of that truly respectable and useful class of men, the British farmers, could have been made more apparent.

Let the writers of paragraphs for the public newspapers, and the general declaimers in taverns and coffee-houses, write and say what they please

please against the inactivity and the want of exertion of this meritorious class; but the man of cool reflection will feel astonishment that, considering the circumstances in which they are placed, they have done so much, rather than that they have allowed any thing to remain unaccomplished.

How different is the situation of the merchant or the manufacturer besides that of the farmer. If the former are fair and honourable in their dealings, they meet with no obstruction in their career. There is no man can say to them, "Unless you will allow me to participate in your profits, I will turn you out of that line of business in which they have been acquired."—No. From the period in which they respectively commence business till the day of their death, they go on in the uninterrupted enjoyment of the fruits of their industry, without any person pretending a right of participation.

Suppose twenty-eight years the age at which merchants and manufacturers in general enter into business for themselves. M. Buffon states, that a man at twenty-eight years of age possesses a reasonable probability of living 29 years. By the preceding statement, the British farmers, according to the present arrangement, cannot possess a farm above six years, without making, or, at any rate, being liable to be called upon

	Brought over	29 years
upon to make, new arrangements with their landlords, by which a portion of the fruits of their former industry shall be assigned to them, or at least that these shall be in future curtailed	- - -	6 years

Difference in favour of the merchant and manufacturer, and against the farmer continuing to enjoy uninterruptedly the fruits of his own industry	23 years
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But let us carry the comparison a little further, and it will be discovered that, owing to the system of policy established and acted upon by the executive government of Great Britain, the merchant and manufacturer are favoured in an especial manner beyond the farmer.

1st, While the legislature, ever vigilant, ever anxious, to extend the commerce, and to spread the manufactures of this country over almost every part of the habitable globe, the British farmers are limited in the sale of grain, the chief article they can bring to market; *the price must be kept moderate for the accommodation of the manufacturers.*

2^d, During the intervals of peace, and while the demand for manufactures is great, the country is drained of useful hands. When a war breaks out, and a stagnation takes place in the manufactures, the hands, then no longer necessary, are sent back to the country to be maintained

tained at the farmer's expence. In proof of this it may be observed, that it is not uncommon for a farmer, who rents land to the extent of a L. 100, to pay more towards the support of the poor in time of war than the merchant or manufacturer, who are in the annual receipt of perhaps L. 1000 a-year of clear profit.

3d, Who have not heard merchants complain of the hardship of being subjected to the visitation of excise-officers? Is not the annual visitation of the clergy, when collecting their tithes in kind, more oppressive on the farmers? In the former case, the insolence of office can only be complained of, because the consumer is obliged to refund the money paid to the officers of the crown as part of the public revenue. In the latter, although the visitation is conducted for the most part with more decorum and propriety, yet what is the result? A heavy tax is levied on the industry of the farmer, who, in regard to reimbursement, is left without recourse, except in so far as the landlord's demand in time of peace is on that account somewhat more moderate.

It is unnecessary to go into a further detail to satisfy every reader, that in many very essential particulars the situation of the farmer is not only greatly inferior to that of the merchant or the manufacturer, but that it is in fact such as, without several important alterations are made

both by the legislature and the proprietors, it is absurd, on solid principles, to expect that improvements in agriculture will ever be generally introduced. Perhaps the best evidence that can be adduced to prove the truth of this assertion is, to call the reader's attention to the extent of success that *even in these improving days* is found to attend the exertions of those who practice the art of husbandry. While the observant man, who feels pleasure in seeing the labours of the industrious in any profession liberally rewarded, has the satisfaction to see the merchant and the manufacturer, in numerous instances, retiring from the hurry and bustle of the world to enjoy in peace and comfort the well-earned fruits of their attention and assiduity in early life, he must regret that so few occur where the farmer, although in all probability as attentive, as assiduous, and as useful a member of society, can sit down in undisturbed quiet and repose in the sag-end of his days. Some farmers, it will be acknowledged, owing to their having made fortunate purchases of land, or by having traded largely in corn or cattle, have risen into affluence; but these are accidental circumstances, and may be considered as connected rather with the business of a merchant than with that of a farmer. In short, while, on the one hand, it is not uncommon to see a merchant or a manufacturer who commenced business with

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with a very trifling, perhaps with no capital, acquire in a few years a handsome fortune; it is, on the other, very singular indeed to see a farmer, who very probably originally possessed ten times the stock, that from the exercise of his profession only has, even in the course of a long life, been able to acquire what the others, with very moderate ideas in regard to a competency, would be satisfied with.

There must therefore be causes that tend as powerfully towards the success of the former as against that of the latter, or such a great and almost uniform difference in the ultimate balance of accounts could not, in every part of these kingdoms, have been for ages so apparent. These causes have been in so far taken notice of; and the proprietors refusing, or not having it in their power, to grant leases of proper duration is not the least important. It is well known, that in every district where improvements have been successfully and extensively carried on, leases were previously granted, and every other proper and reasonable encouragement also given to the tenants. It is equally well known, that where the mode of letting lands on lease has been introduced, the proprietors have, in every instance, found it for their interest to pursue the same plan. They found, from experience, that the tenants, feeling themselves possessed of an interest in the improve-
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ment of the soil, of course bestowed every degree of attention on that as their principal object. Hence the landlords, at the expiration of the original leases, considering themselves justly entitled to derive a fair advantage from the exertion, enterprise, and assiduity of the former tenants, which was excited in consequence of the assurance given them of possessing the farm for a specified number of years, demanded, and received, an additional rent.

In concluding this, which to some may appear an uninteresting subject, although really extremely important, it may not be improper to observe, that the Legislature, the Board of Agriculture, and the proprietors of the country, may adopt what measures in their wisdom may appear the most likely to effect the improvement of the national territory; but unless they go to the root of the evil, unless they adopt such measures as will tend to place the British farmers in a more comfortable situation, and more on a footing with the merchants and manufacturers, the object will not be attained. Give them, but to a proper extent, a permanent interest in the fields they cultivate, and improvements in agriculture will rapidly ensue.

Besides granting leases, other circumstances require to be attended to by such proprietors who, anxious for the general improvement of the country, may have adopted, or are desirous to

to adopt, the laudable resolution of contributing thereto by the introduction of new and better modes on that portion of it which has fallen to their share. These may be comprised under the following heads :

Improper covenants in leases, and the period of duration best calculated to promote the interest of all parties.

The size of farms in some instances operate against the general improvements of the country.

The modes usually adopted for letting farms, some of which are extremely reprehensible.

The species of rent that ought to be stipulated in place of personal services, &c.

The propriety of increasing, or at least of not decreasing, the farmer's capital.

Improper covenants in leases, and the period of duration best calculated to promote the interest of all parties.—Copies of leases the best adapted, in the writer's apprehension, to ensure a small share of independence to the farmers, and consequently the most likely to excite a general spirit for improvement, have already been laid before the reader. Here it is only intended to give some reasons why leases of moderate endurance ought to be considered best calculated to promote the interest of all concerned. While it will be universally allowed, that with-

holding leases, or granting them for a period of seven years only, or on a single life, are great impediments to the introduction of improved cultivation, it has been proved from experience, in numerous instances, that granting leases for a great number of years is not a measure calculated to produce the good consequences which many people, who have considered the subject in a cursory manner, are disposed to expect from it. It has been repeatedly mentioned on former occasions, in the course of this work, that among farmers in particular ancient prejudices operate powerfully against the adoption of better methods. When a farmer attains, by means of a lease, a permanent interest in a particular farm, for thirty-eight, perhaps fifty-seven years, it may be admitted that he commences his improving operations with spirit, and according to the most approved fashion of the time. But as every person knows, that, notwithstanding the impediments that stand in the way, improvements are daily taking place in the particular modes of management as well as in the general system of agriculture; they must also be satisfied, that practices, which twenty years ago were considered as greatly superior to what were then common, are now, from the influx of agricultural knowledge, sunk below mediocrity. Many who read this publication will be convinced, from their own knowledge, of the just-

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ness of the remark. There are in Scotland, in particular, some very extensive estates which were let, between twenty and thirty years ago, on what were called Improving Leases; that is, on leases for two or three nineteen years, besides the lifetime of the tenant, who shall be in the actual possession at the expiry of the certain determinate period, some of which may in all probability be in endurance for upwards of a century. It is a well-known and established fact, that in general (for there are exceptions) the tenants on these estates are at present in a torpid inactive state, adhering most pertinaciously to those methods of culture which at the commencement of the leases were most in vogue; while it is equally true, that the tenants on the neighbouring estates, who hold their farms on leases for nineteen or twenty-one years only, are adopting with spirit and alacrity those methods and practices which more recent experience has proved to be real improvements.

Circumstances, no doubt, frequently occur which render it necessary for the landlord to grant an active, spirited, improving farmer a lease of more than ordinary duration; such as, when the tenant undertakes to improve a considerable extent of waste land at his own expence, or to expend money in erecting farm-houses, in inclosing, draining, &c. But in general, in the writer's opinion, leases for about twenty years

ought to be considered, in all respects, the best suited for promoting the joint interests of the landlord, the tenant, and the public. Were leases limited to this period, the landlords, generally speaking, would have it in their power, once at least during their occupancy, to remodel their estates, to introduce such practices, and to direct such improvements, as from their own knowledge, or from the experience of others, they were satisfied would prove advantageous to all concerned. Another circumstance, in stating the reasons why twenty years is supposed an equitable period for the duration of a lease, and in which the landlord's interest is materially interested, especially where rents are paid in money, is the astonishing depreciation that has recently taken place in the value of that article. To explain this in the way most connected with the subject, it may be observed, that a tenant, possessing one of the leases above alluded to, implying the payment of L. 100 a-year of rent, although he now annually pays his landlord one hundred pieces of paper stamped with the value of one pound each, yet he does not actually pay him the value which sixty pounds were of at the time the bargain was entered into; and very probably before the expiry of some of the leases the landlord will not receive five shillings in the pound of the understood value of the farms at their commencement. Had the
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rent been made payable in produce, in grain for instance, no great defalcation in its real value would have taken place. But where money is made the medium, twenty years leases seem as long as proprietors, in equity to themselves or to their successors, are entitled to grant. It has been said, and the remark is just, that few things tend to awaken farmers into exertion more than demanding a reasonable rise of rent; it operates as a spur to their industry, and sets them on adopting improved modes of husbandry, such as are best calculated for affording the means of answering this new demand. On this principle, limiting the duration of leases to somewhere about twenty years, may, in a general view, operate in such a manner as to promote the interest of that body at large, however it may militate against that of a few active individuals.

Were proprietors to come to the resolution of granting leases for twenty years, how greatly would the situation of the farmers of this country be improved beyond what it is at present? If, in place of six years only, the period were enlarged to twenty, they would be put in some degree on a footing with the merchant and manufacturer, in regard to the period in which they could uninterruptedly reap the fruits of their labours; and then, besides rivalling them in assiduity and exertion, it might be expected, were the other obstacles already mentioned removed,

moved, they would likewise in many instances rival them in success.

As new arrangements between landlords and tenants generally pave the way for the introduction of improved modes of husbandry, provided the tenants are ensured of such a period of possession as to warrant them to undertake such improvements, there can be no doubt but the public are benefited thereby. Hence that duration of lease which entitles the tenant to commence his improvements with spirit, and is not of such a length as to induce him, from any fortuitous circumstances that may take place, as a rise in the nominal price of produce, or a fall in the value of money, to slacken his attention, may be considered upon the whole as best; and probably twenty years is as equitable a term as, in the present state of British agriculture, can well be fixed upon.

From the ignorance of those who are for the most part employed in drawing leases in regard to all country affairs, and owing perhaps too in some degree to the desire which some landlords still retain of keeping their tenants in a degree of bondage, many improper covenants are frequently introduced. Were the writer disposed, he might, by selecting a number of clauses from Scotch leases, either current or lately expired, hold up to public view as complete a picture of slavery as is perhaps to be met with in any part of modern

modern Europe. But this would be no less unpleasant to himself than disgusting to the reader. The most important covenants in any lease are those that respect the mode in which the farm ought to be cropped, and the general management during the period it is demised or leased. These, in place of being wrapt up as it were in a cover of bombastical law-jargon, which is too often the case, ought to be detailed in plain intelligible language, and nothing introduced that is not necessary to convey a clear idea of the meaning of the parties at the time the transaction was entered into. Were this rule adopted, numerous vexatious and expensive law-suits between proprietors and tenants would be prevented, and a foundation thereby laid for a greater degree of harmony and good understanding than, it is to be regretted, in too many instances at present exists. There are covenants, or obligatory clauses, frequently ingrossed in leases, to the performance of which tenants bind themselves, although there is scarcely an attorney's clerk in the island that does not know they are not bound in law to implement them. What these are it would be impolitical to specify; but while, from motives of propriety, they are only hinted at, in place of being fully explained, it is not the less necessary that proprietors should make a point of expunging from such deeds every clause or covenant

covenant that they are fully satisfied will not stand the test in a court of law.

The three respectable farmers who wrote the Report of the West Riding of Yorkshire have used many very specious arguments to convince the Board of Agriculture, that "covenants (by which they mean restrictions) are inimical to all good husbandry;" and add, "they sink the farmer into a state of insignificance; they contract his mind, and lock up his ideas from searching after new schemes, which is the only method by which improvements can ever be found out; and therefore it follows, that a continuation of covenants (restrictions) is highly detrimental, not only to the public good, but even to the interest of the proprietor himself, by lessening the rent that a superior cultivation would be able to pay."

The writer has already, when treating of the proper rotation of crops, fully explained his sentiments on that important subject; nor would he have resumed it here, but from a thorough conviction that the framers of the Report of the West-Riding of Yorkshire, in their zeal to do as far as in them lay to get their brethren in that district relieved from the improper covenants frequently ingrossed in the Yorkshire leases, have not only materially injured the cause they meant to serve, but the cause also of agriculture in general.

The writers of the report above quoted may probably, with great propriety, be trusted, as Lord Kames observes, "with unlimited powers" to cultivate their farms in that manner which is most agreeable to their own ideas; but this would be a most ruinous system if generally adopted. Judicious rotations of cropping, and plain explicit regulations for enforcing the tenants adherence to them, have had more effect, in regard to the general and permanent improvement of the particular districts where they are established, than any measure the landlords have hitherto adopted, that of granting leases only excepted. It is therefore extremely unfortunate for the cause of agriculture, when men, possessing so much scientific knowledge as Mess. Rennie, Brown, and Sheriff, give their unqualified disapprobation of a measure which, under proper regulations, cannot fail, and which pretty general experience has proved has not hitherto failed, to produce beneficial consequences.

Besides restrictions in regard to cropping, which ought not, however, to be adopted without due consideration, there are many other circumstances which require attention in framing a lease, and such as those only who have had experience in country affairs can judge of with precision. Several of the English reports take notice of the absurd practice adopted by many of the proprietors, of employing attorneys in the management

of their estates, and represent it as no inconsiderable bar to the improvement of the country. This practice is not confined to England: By the following extract from the Report of the County of Stirling, with which it is intended to close this account of British leases, it will be seen that it is also prevalent in Scotland.

“ Proprietors are themselves to blame, in many instances, for the slow progress which improvements have made in this quarter. Many points are necessary to be well weighed before an estate ought to be relet. It is also necessary to mention one unfortunate circumstance in the management of many estates in this county, chiefly those which are the property of absentees. It is too often the practice of these owners to commit the entire management of their affairs to men of the law, writers, attorneys, or by whatsoever name one chooses to call them. These persons are almost universally ignorant of country business; their whole merit with their constituent consists in the regularity with which they collect the rents. This is oftentimes very useful; but when universally practised, without attending to persons and circumstances, becomes a nuisance. As to *modes of culture, the state of buildings, fences, roads, &c.* all of them points of very great importance, mighty little attention is bestowed. A law-suit is a notable advantage to them, and which they seldom fail to generate by

by coercing tenants, irritating neighbours, and by other methods much easier felt than expressed. Of this improper system of management sundry famous instances are to be found in this county."

The size of farms, in some instances, operate against the general improvement of the country.— It was formerly mentioned, when treating of this subject in general, that the greater variety there is in the extent or size of farms, provided that variety be general over every district, the more extensively will the interests of the nation at large be promoted. When the farms in the vicinity of a populous town are all large, the inhabitants of that town must be subjected to much greater inconvenience and expence in procuring many of the smaller necessaries and conveniences of life, than if, by a proper intermixture of large and small farms, the objects of the tenant's attention had been as various as the wants of the inhabitants.

When, again, extensive districts are divided into small farms, as is the case in Wales and the North of Scotland, as it is by men of superior intelligence, activity, and capital alone, that improvements in agriculture can be either introduced or established, every person must be satisfied, that without affording some farmers of this description opportunities of exerting themselves,

these districts must for ever remain in a great degree unproductive. It therefore becomes not only the interest but the duty of the proprietors of these districts, as members of the community, to arrange and divide their estates into farms of various sizes, in place of allowing the whole to continue in such small allotments, that the possessors have it not in their power to render any service to themselves, or to the other inhabitants of that part of the country where they are resident.

That farms of a large size can be managed with a greater degree of economy, in regard to labour, than small ones, is a point so extremely obvious as to require no illustration: But it may not be improper for these proprietors who are satisfied that a variety in the size of farms is in every respect the best, to satisfy themselves what is the smallest extent of land in one farm that can be cultivated with a reasonable degree of economy; as, without attending to this particular, great errors may be committed in the allotment of estates into farms. Lord Kames has decided this point in a very concise manner: "A farm (his Lordship says) ought never to contain a less quantity of land than sufficient for a plough; and there is no medium between that quantity and as much as will give full employment to two. Less than sufficient for a plough is an evident loss to a tenant, and consequently

quently to the landlord; the servants and the cattle must at times be idle for want of work, or, what is worse, they will work indolently and make no progress *." In so far, it will be generally acknowledged, his Lordship's statement is accurate; but when he proceeds to state the number of acres which may be cultivated with one plough, meaning a team of two horses, he has fallen into a most egregious error. His words are, p. 291. and 292. "When one thinks of calculating what quantity of land is sufficient for a single plough, many circumstances occur that make it impracticable to determine the point with precision. The difference between a light and heavy soil is considerable; and no less so the nearness or distance of manure. The mode of cropping is capital; for where all the different plants are sown in spring and reaped in autumn, more ploughs are requisite than when crops are dispersed through the year, according to the present improved mode of culture. I venture only in general to say, that in most soils *fifty acres* (meaning Scotch acres; that is, about sixty English) *of corn may be commanded by a single plough*, provided the crops be distributed through the year, to afford time for managing all of them with the same men and cattle. But where grass is necessary for keeping the soil in heart,

* The Gentleman Farmer, p. 290.

heart, a farm ought to be enlarged in proportion to the quantity of grass required; for there ought always to be as much land in tillage as fully to occupy a plough. If a third part in grass be sufficient, the farm ought to consist of seventy-five acres; if a half be necessary, the farm ought to be a hundred acres; and if the soil be so mean as to require two-thirds in grass, the extent of the farm ought to be one hundred and fifty acres. If the reader be curious about further particulars, I refer him to the seventh chapter, in which a few examples are given of the number of acres that, in different modes of cropping, may be commanded by one plough."

One of the rotations of cropping which his Lordship particularises, is that formerly mentioned as being now generally adopted in the Carle of Gowrie, viz. 1st, Fallow; 2^d, Wheat; 3^d, Pease or Beans; 4th, Barley; 5th, Clover; and, 6th, Oats: and he supposes that a farm of 72 acres, exclusive of garden and pasturage, may be cultivated by one team; that is, sixty Scotch acres of tillage land, besides the twelve acres in clover. In describing another rotation of cropping, which he considers better adapted to strong carle clay soils, he limits the extent of tillage lands to 48 Scotch, or about 57 English acres. The writer has not hitherto been in any part of Great Britain where strong clay soils prevail, and where more labour is performed

ed by a team than in the Carle of Gowrie; and yet he hesitates not to maintain, that even there, where the ploughmen are expert, and the labouring horses, in respect of strength and mettle, superior to the general run even in the more improved parts of either kingdom, the farmers, with all their activity (and no person will charge them justly with being indolent), have not hitherto been able to accomplish the management of much above half the number of tillage acres by one team that his Lordship states as being practicable to effect. It is not to be supposed that the opinion of one writer, in regard to a particular point of agriculture, when set in opposition to that of another greatly more respectable, is to have much weight with a judicious reader; but when facts are brought forward that contradict opinions, these, by whomsoever promulgated, must be held as opinions only. Particular circumstances, as Lord Kames justly observes, must make a material difference in regard to the number of tillage acres, the management of which can be accomplished with one team. But proprietors, to whom these observations are more particularly addressed, can be under no difficulty, by giving themselves the trouble of making the necessary inquiries, to ascertain, according to the rotation of cropping proposed to be adopted, what is the least number of acres that ought to be set apart to be cultivated

tivated by one team ; or, in other words, what is the smallest number of acres in one farm that the tenant can cultivate on terms in a considerable degree economical. The result of such inquiries will be, that Lord Kames has stated a system upon supposition, which it is physically impossible to reduce to practice.

The modes usually adopted for letting farms, some of which are extremely reprehensible, fall next under consideration.—It has already been remarked, that additional rents operate in general as a spur to agricultural improvements. That this has actually been proved to be the case, and that in numerous instances, consists with the writer's own knowledge. But it does not thence follow, that the more an animal is spurred and jaded, the greater exertions it will continue to make, and that there is thereby the less danger of its becoming restive ; on the contrary, exhausted as it must be by over-exertion, is there not a much greater probability of its becoming incapable of moving at all ? Some persons, over-zealous in administering this sort of spur, act as if they did not know that it is possible to fix a fair market price on a farm, and seem to regulate their conduct in letting lands agreeable to the old saying, "That a thing is worth just what it will bring." It cannot be supposed that those who act on such principles will feel them-

selves disposed to pay attention to any observations on the subject of letting lands that do not coincide with their own ideas. There are many reasons, however, that induce the writer to consider it incumbent on him to state such facts and circumstances, respecting the modes of letting farms in these kingdoms, as have come to his knowledge; and when he shall have done so, every reader is at perfect liberty to draw his own conclusions.

The modes usually adopted for letting farms are not confined to two or three, although two or three shall only be taken notice of. They are as various as the whim, or caprice, or sometimes the avarice, of proprietors can devise. That proprietors ought to receive a fair consideration for the use of their lands, no reasonable person will deny; but that they should descend to do little things in order to obtain more than an equivalent, is a proposition that scarcely any person will maintain.

One method of letting farms, little, in the writer's opinion, to the credit either of those who advise or those who direct the measure, is by public auction. This, although a practice adopted by some proprietors in both kingdoms, to the honour of that respectable class at large be it said, is not general. To expose an article to public sale that may be transferred to the purchaser, the price paid, and the transaction wound

up in a few hours, may be in many instances a measure of expediency and propriety; but, as Mr Marshall very justly observes when discussing this subject, that the case is very different with a man who is to pay his rent half yearly, and to conform with a number of covenants and regulations, both which are necessary to be stipulated when a farm is leased for a number of years. He says, "In this case it is not more the *rent* than the *man* that is to be looked to and chosen. Among candidates at auctions for letting farms are generally adventurers who want judgment, and men of desperate fortunes who want a temporary subsistence; and these men will ever be the highest bidders, will ever outbid men of judgment and capital; such as will pay their rent, keep up their repairs, and improve the land; such as ought ever to be, and ever are, the choice of judicious managers of estates*."

This description of offerers, who most generally attend at auctions of leases of farms in the west of England, are not confined to that district of country alone; in every other part of the island where farms are leased in this manner, such characters make their appearance. Were the proprietors who adopt this rule of conduct to be the only sufferers, by having tenants such as Mr Marshall describes introduced upon their estates

* Marshall's Rural Economy of the West of England, vol. i. p. 74.

estates, no person would regret the circumstance; but unfortunately, in so far-as improvements on a farm begin to slacken, or take a retrograde motion, in so far the general cause of agriculture suffers.

Another method still more reprehensible, because less honourable, is that of advertising a lease of a farm in the public papers, under the condition "that such offers as are not accepted shall be kept *secret*, if desired." How the gentlemen, who authorise such advertisements to be inserted in the public papers (and they are by no means uncommon in those of Edinburgh), can reconcile themselves to the propriety of such a practice, it may be difficult to determine; but the writer would not require a stronger presumptive proof to satisfy his mind that some species of fraud is thereby intended, and that for the plainest of all reasons; for if the transaction be meant to be conducted on fair and honourable principles, why make a mystery of it? Why encourage people, by this under-hand kind of dealing, to come forward to make offers in secret, who dare not do it in the face of all the world? The prevalency of the practice has, in Scotland at least, given it a kind of sanction; but that gentleman must have had a considerable degree of resolution who first permitted his name to be coupled with such an advertisement. In some of the agricultural reports it is stated, that

a want of confidence exists to such a degree between landlords and tenants, as in many cases to prove an obstacle to the introduction or establishment of any sort of improvement. If adopting either of the modes of letting farms above-described be not reason sufficient why farmers should withhold their confidence, where, under such circumstances, it would be so much misplaced, it is scarcely possible to suppose a case where a man could be vindicated for not placing confidence, though confidence was not due.

It will, however, give satisfaction to every liberal mind, to understand that by far the greatest number of agreements for leases have their origin in fair candid conversations, that take place between the proprietors or their agents and the tenants; and that where the good sense and discretion of the latter entitle him to such confidence, and his opinion to so much respect, he is in general consulted and advised with as to the manner in which the most important covenants of the lease ought to be framed. Were this rule of conduct to be more generally adopted, that confidence which the tenant has always a heartfelt satisfaction in placing in his landlord, when from experience he is convinced it will not be abused, would soon be restored, and both parties would feel, what is unquestionably the case, namely, that the interest of the one is intimately connected with that of the other. But while

while an industrious active tenant has reason to suspect that the lease of a farm, on the improvement of which he has expended both his time and his money, will be brought to the hammer, and assigned over to the highest bidder, no matter of what description; or when he sees an advertisement in the public papers, importing that all his enemies are at perfect liberty, and that in the most secret manner, to step forward, and either deprive him of his farm, or raise the rent to such a degree as, if he continues in the possession of it, may have the effect to render him a slave for life,—he would be worse than a madman were he to confide in those who were capable of acting in a manner so diametrically opposite to his interest, and to those principles on which their conduct, under such circumstances, ought to be regulated.

To let an estate properly, is, in many instances, a very difficult business; and to conduct that business without giving offence, requires no small degree of management, as will be afterwards more fully explained. Suffice it here to say, that agents are often blamed when the proprietors are in fault. Were proprietors to do what people in any other station or situation in life would be ashamed not to have done; were they to acquire a proper knowledge of their own affairs, cultivate a good understanding with their tenants, and, by seeing now and then with their
own

own eyes, be enabled to judge for themselves : Were this the case, the management of estates would not only be an undertaking less arduous, but the interests of agriculture would also be greatly promoted. While proprietors continue to evince a sovereign contempt for every thing that has the most distant connection with business, or an investigation of their own affairs, as is in general too much the case, such a conduct must operate in various ways as an obstacle to the improvement of the country.

The species of rent that ought to be stipulated in place of personal services, &c. is also a circumstance that merits the attention of proprietors, or their agents, when making new arrangements with tenants. Various reasons have been stated in the preceding pages, as having induced the writer to consider money as by no means so equitable a rent as grain ; but it is unnecessary to enter particularly on the subject. The reason of again introducing it, is with a view of calling to the reader's recollection its having been stated in the beginning of the second volume, that, in the North of Scotland, the rents are to a certain extent paid in personal services ; the tenants being bound to plough and harrow a certain portion of the proprietor's farm ; to reap, carry home, thrash, dress, and mill a certain quantity of his crop at their own charges ; and that they

are also bound to pay poultry, eggs, cheese, sheep, swine, fish, linen, yarn, &c. It might have been unavoidably necessary, from the want of a circulating medium in the early periods of the history of this country, to oblige the tenants to pay their rents in personal services, and in the various articles of produce which their farms afforded. It must be considered a singular circumstance in the History of Great Britain, that in the end of the eighteenth century, and at a period when the introduction of improvements in agriculture is the chief topic of conversation, there should exist proprietors who are so lost to every sentiment regarding what is due to the community of which they are members, to the people whom Providence has placed under their protection, and to the improvement of their native country, as to persist in demanding from their tenants a species of rent which no farmer, who is entitled to the name, would submit to pay, nor any proprietor, who regarded the good of his country or his own interest, think of requiring.

It would be wrong to detain the reader with making any observations respecting how much the payment of rents in the manner above described must operate as an obstacle to the introduction of spirited agriculture. It is evident that the poor people, who are so situated, must be sunk to the lowest state of dependency; and that

that unless the proprietors shall be induced from the example of others, or commanded by precept (by an act of the legislature), to adopt an opposite line of conduct, it is vain to talk of improvements in agriculture to people who cannot, by any exertion of which they are capable, improve or render tolerable their own situation.

The propriety of increasing, or at least of not decreasing, the farmer's capital, is the only other circumstance that, in the view of their making such arrangements with their tenants as cannot fail, in a material degree, to promote the interests of agriculture, it is intended to mention in this section as meriting the proprietors consideration.

Whoever is conversant in the management of estates, must be fully satisfied that farmers renting a larger extent of land than they have a capital properly to stock and improve, is no inconsiderable obstacle to the introduction of better modes of husbandry. Numerous instances, to prove the truth of this assertion, might be pointed out in perhaps every district of Great Britain; at least many such have fallen under the writer's observation. It consists with his knowledge, that some farmers, at bargaining for a lease, have stated their capitals at more than three times the sum, which in a few years afterwards it was found they were ever in possession of.

of. By thus acting, they not only did irreparable injury to themselves, but also a material one to the landlords; as the improvement of the lands which, under the presumption that they possessed sufficient capitals, were leased to them, in place of being put under the management of others who actually possessed capitals sufficient, with proper industry, to stock and improve them, were, owing to the impropriety of their conduct, greatly retarded, or, which was equally bad, such improvements as had been previously effected were permitted to take a retrograde motion. The consequence of which was, that discredit was brought on the farm, and on those who were in the management of the estate. In so far, however, as the writer has had access to know, farmers, who in this manner deceive themselves, their landlords, and agents, are so inconsiderable in point of number, that their conduct, improper as it certainly is, would scarcely have any perceptible effect on the agriculture of the country, did not proprietors too frequently stipulate, that a part of the farmer's capital should be expended in making improvements, which in nine cases out of ten ought to be effected by the landlords, or at least by the expenditure of their money.

A manufacturer can carry on his trade without being under the necessity of diverting any part of his capital from the proper channel. He

can hire the requisite accommodation of houses, warehouses, &c. from others, and at a reasonable rate, according to his situation in regard to markets. The merchant, in place of being obliged to build ships to transport his merchandise to distant markets, finds them ready in every port; and he can hire the use of the whole, or a part of any one he pleases, and at a given rate, according to the distance of the intended voyage. In these respects, how greatly superior is his situation compared to that of the farmers? A very great proportion of the farmers of this country are obliged, owing to the parsimony of the proprietors, to furnish themselves with the necessary accommodation of houses in which to carry on their business; to sink, in erecting houses, perhaps a third part of that capital which is indispensably necessary, or which in almost any case would be usefully employed, in carrying on their business, in laying a foundation for their own future comfort, and in securing to the landlord a well paid rent.

To expend money in erecting buildings, in inclosing, draining, and such improvements, is certainly much more the business of the landlords than the tenants. Besides that the former have a much more permanent interest in such improvements, they ought also to reflect that the capitals of the generality of farmers are very limited, in proportion to the extent of lands which they

they wish to farm; and that by diverting any portion of these capitals from the channels in which they ought, for the mutual interest of the parties, to flow, they retard those improvements which it is very probably their principal object to effect. With such farmers as possess a sufficiency both of spirit and capital, the matter is very different. With them, arrangements may be made on very different principles. They will be satisfied with a consideration in time, in additional duration of lease, for such improvements as they may become bound to effect: but farmers who can with propriety treat and conclude at such terms will, it is to be feared, for many years yet to come continue to be the smallest number. It is not uncommon for merchants or manufacturers to borrow money on interest for carrying on their various trades; nor can it be considered in any degree derogatory to the character of a farmer to covenant to pay his landlord interest for money expended, to promote his convenience or advantage, especially when done, as it must always be, in the manner most agreeable to himself.

It may tend to the information of some proprietors, as well as farmers, to state, in the first place, how the account would ultimately stand, on the supposition that, at the commencement of a twenty-one years lease, the landlord was to advance L. 100 for the purpose of building

houses, and for which the tenant became bound to pay him five *per cent. per annum*; and, in the second, how the tenant stands at the close of a lease of the same duration, who shall have expended a like sum of his own capital in furnishing himself with the necessary accommodation in respect to houses, and which the landlord is obliged to refund at the expiry of the lease.

Suppose a proprietor had agreed to expend L. 100 in building houses, or in executing any other essential improvements, the benefits of which the tenant was to reap during the currency of his lease, and in consideration of which he had become bound to pay five *per cent. per annum* during his occupancy; this annuity of L. 5 a year, paid in name of interest, would, if improved by compound interest for twenty-one years, amount to L. 178 : 11 : 10 : therefore, in this view, L. 178 : 11 : 10 ought to be considered by the tenant as actually paid by him for the use of this L. 100 during a lease of twenty-one years. Although this may appear to some as extravagant, the contrary is the case; for if a farmer will appropriate L. 100 of his own money to be improved at compound interest for a like period, he will find that *the surplus* will amount to precisely the same sum.

When a farmer covenants with his landlord to furnish himself with the necessary accommodation of houses, or becomes bound to inclose a farm,

farm, on condition of being repaid at the end of the lease, the sum or sums which such improvements shall have cost him at the commencement, he may be thought to pay the same sum as interest of the money thus expended, for the reason above-mentioned; namely, that he could have improved the interest of the money in the same ratio that the proprietor could have done. But there is one view of this subject that merits consideration. If a farmer expends L. 100 of his own money on building houses, &c. and which sum the landlord becomes bound to repay at the expiry of the lease, should the farmer be under the necessity, owing to any unforeseen accident, to sell his interest in this L. 100 soon after the houses have been erected, or other improvements made, on account of the distance of the period at which it is payable by the landlord, it would be worth no more, in ready money, to the tenant than L. 35 : 17 : 10.

Some proprietors insist on receiving six, others seven, and others again seven and a half, *per cent.* for money expended by them on the improvement of particular farms. When six *per cent.* is demanded, the tenant, by the time a lease of twenty-one years expires, will have paid, *beyond legal interest*, sums which, if improved to the utmost extent by compound interest at 5 *per cent.* would at last, on L. 100 for twenty-

one

one years, amount to *£*. 35 14 3

At 7 *per cent.* to *£*. 71 8 6

At 7½ *per cent.* to *£*. 89 15 7½

But notwithstanding of this evident sacrifice of property, and however far it may be improper on the part of the landlords to stipulate with their tenants for the payment of higher interests for money expended on the improvement of their estates than the law in ordinary cases allows to be paid; yet, in very many instances where the farmer's capital is too limited for the extent of his undertaking, it would be much for his advantage to accept of the use of the landlord's money at six or even seven *per cent.* rather than to deprive himself of the use of his own for carrying on the operations of husbandry according to the most approved system; as purchasing lime, marl, well-constructed implements, cattle of sufficient strength, &c. &c. The conduct of landlords, in not more generally advancing money to execute some of the most expensive improvements that are necessary to be effected before spirited agriculture can be introduced upon their estates, appears extremely incomprehensible. It is well known, that when a person has money to lend, he prefers a mortgage on land, or what in Scotland is called Heritable Security, to that of any individual, however respectable. Many proprietors, from mistaken ideas, while they lend money on the security of other people's estates,

frequently bring their tenants under obligations to mortgage a part of their capitals on their own. This is certainly an extremely absurd system, and evinces, in the clearest manner, that such proprietors do not all that is in their power to promote their own real interest, the reasonable independence of their tenants, or the good of the country. Their own interest is neglected, in so far as tenants, in general, pay a higher interest for money so expended than the law allows to be paid for the use of money lent in mortgage: besides, were the money expended in this manner on the improvement of their own estates in place of being lent, perhaps for the express purpose of improving those of their neighbours, they would reap that increase of revenue which the others, by a judicious application of their money, are entitled to receive. That the independent and spirited conduct of a farmer rises or falls with the ability he possesses of conducting his affairs without embarrassment, will not require much reasoning to prove. It is a common saying, and a true one, that a poor farmer is always a bad one; therefore, when proprietors subject their tenants, by improper covenants in leases, to expend money for any other purposes than those it ought to be applied to, they adopt a measure which must have the effect, except in particular cases, of rendering them poor, and consequently dependent.

It

It is equally clear that the interest of agriculture, and of course that of the country, suffers, and has materially suffered, from proprietors having too generally adopted this line of conduct. Suppose, for instance, that one-tenth part only of the improving farmers' capitals, over Great Britain at large, is sunk in erecting necessary buildings, in draining, and in inclosing, and that this is the case, there is every reason to believe; if so, what an immense sum is diverted from its proper channel, and locked up from being useful in carrying on agriculture with spirit? In the hands of farmers of the above description, what wonderful effects would be produced by the use of such a capital? What a spur would it give to their industry and exertion? And how great and beneficial the consequences that would necessarily ensue?

Knowing that there are proprietors who have adopted a different line of conduct, that there are proprietors who, satisfied of its being better policy to mortgage their superabundant money on their own estates than on that of their neighbours (notwithstanding the one is of a redeemable nature, and the other not), and who have not hesitated, on every occasion, to expend money in executing some of the more essential and necessary improvements, such as must be effected before the way can be paved for the introduction of new and better modes of agriculture,

ture, and hoping that the example of these public-spirited gentlemen may induce others to follow so laudable an example, the writer shall, in the succeeding chapter, make some observations regarding the manner in which those, which may be called the primary improvements, may be made on the most equitable and economical terms both for the proprietor and tenant. In the mean time it may not be improper, by an enumeration, to recal to the reader's recollection the various obstacles that bar the way to the general improvement of the country, and which shall be done in the order in which they have been discussed, viz.

Obstacles which the Legislature only can remove;
as,

The payment of tithes in kind.

The poor's rates.

Customary tenures.

Unproductive state of the crown-lands.

Improper management of the church-lands.

Lands held under entail.

Commons and commonable rights.

Open-field lands.

Thirlage to mills.

The game-laws; and to which may be added,

The corn-laws, and

The miserable state of the parish-roads.

Obstacles in the power of proprietors to remove.

The want of leases. Under which general head may be comprised,

Improper covenants in leases, and the period of duration best calculated to promote the interest of all parties.

The size of farms, in some instances, operate against the general improvement of the country.

The modes usually adopted for letting farms, some of which are extremely reprehensible.

The species of rent that ought to be stipulated in place of personal services, &c.

The propriety of increasing, or at least of not decreasing, the farmer's capital.

From this enumeration, and from the preceding detailed account, however much the reader may have been taught of late to believe respecting the probability, nay, the certainty, of a great and general improvement being speedily effected, in regard to the modes of conducting the agricultural operations of these kingdoms; yet he must be satisfied, that without a total alteration in many important particulars, every hope that such an event will soon take place must be vain and elusory. While such obstacles are allowed to bar the way, none but men of heated imaginations will entertain sanguine expectations respecting the general improvement
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of the country. If, through the intervention of the legislature, proper alterations are made in such of the existing laws as tend to depress the farming interest; and if, through the medium of the National Board of Agriculture, measures can be devised to impress the proprietors with a thorough conviction, that to grant their tenants such a share of independence, as leases of moderate endurance are calculated to ensure, this desirable event may in time be effected. But while the executive government continues to bestow all its favours on the merchants and manufacturers, and the members of the Board of Agriculture to evince a more sedulous attention to the improvement of the minute branches of husbandry, as the cultivation of potatoes, &c. than to the emancipation of the farmers from their present state of servitude (a measure which ought to have been the first and chief object of their attention), there are few men who can, on rational principles, satisfy either themselves or others, that there are substantial grounds for believing a general improvement will soon be effected in the agriculture of the country.

It would have afforded infinitely more satisfaction to the writer, could he, in place of dwelling so long on the obstacles that impede improvements, with equal propriety have congratulated his countrymen on the happiness they experienced, in consequence of none such having ex-

isted. But as, to the woeful experience of many an industrious farmer, they do actually exist, he conceives he would have been negligent in his duty had he not endeavoured to exhibit them in their true colours. That it is not only practicable, but easy, to remove them by the use of proper means, is an unquestionable fact. Whether these means shall be speedily and successfully used, time only can discover; that they may, must be the sincere wish of every lover of his country.

CHAP.



CHAP. XXXIII.

Improvements suggested, and the best Means to be adopted, for encouraging that Spirit for Agricultural Improvement which is at present so general pointed out.

HAVING endeavoured, in the preceding pages, after giving a short agricultural description of each county, to lay before the reader a particular account of the methods most generally adopted for carrying on the various branches of husbandry; and having also stated, at considerable length, the numerous obstacles which obstruct, and which, unless removed, ever must obstruct, the complete improvement of these kingdoms—it is now proposed, on the supposition that these obstacles will some time or other be removed, to call the reader's attention to the several means necessary to be adopted, in order to render Great Britain, what every inhabitant would wish it to be, namely, a well cultivated country. In doing this, it is intended to adhere

to

to the order in which the most interesting subjects have been arranged, and afterwards to take notice of some particulars which have not hitherto fallen under consideration.

After the situation of the farmers is improved by granting leases of moderate endurance, and after the other obstacles before mentioned are removed, proprietors and farmers will do well to attend to the following hints :

- I. *To erect substantial and commodious farm-houses and offices, according to the extent of the farms, and the modes in which the lands are occupied.*

It must be obvious to every proprietor, that the more their tenants are taught to know the comforts of life, the greater will be their exertions, in order to be enabled to participate in the enjoyment of them ; and that commodious dwellings are to be ranked among the number, will not be denied. But this is not all ; proprietors ought to reflect that suitable and commodious farm-houses are as necessary for enabling the farmer to carry on his business with advantage, as warehouses are to the merchant, or workshops to the manufacturer.

The sum and substance of all the reports presented to the Board of Agriculture, in so far as respects farm-buildings, is, that, except in the

south of Scotland, and the north-east part of England, including also Norfolk, the farm-houses are not only in general inadequate to the farmer's accommodation, but for the most part so improperly situated, as to increase, in a very considerable degree, the expence of cultivation. In the reports of Wales and the north of Scotland the dwelling-houses are stated to be extremely bad, and the offices, if possible, worse; and to increase the evil, that they are for the most part placed at the extremity of the farms. On the whole, that they are in such a situation as would render it difficult for farmers in any of the districts above-mentioned "to conceive the shifts and contrivances made use of as substitutes for proper accommodation," were they not to reflect that the period is not far gone since, from similar causes, they were themselves obliged to have recourse to similar shifts. In the southern, midland, and western counties of England, the general situation of the tenants, in respect to houses, cannot be said to be materially different from that now taken notice of. In many of the recently inclosed parishes, regular well constructed farm-buildings are to be seen; and such are also to be observed in parishes of other descriptions; but the instances are comparatively rare. The farm-houses, in the open-field parishes in particular, "*are constructed with the same regard to convenience, &c.* as the fields themselves. They
are

are frequently placed together, forming the appearance of a miserable disjointed street; *a sure item of the poverty of the farmers and their bad system of husbandry* *."

While farmers are obliged to resort to such shifts as above alluded to, in order to accommodate themselves and their cattle, and to preserve their crops, no reasonable man can expect they will ever become spirited improvers. The actual loss which they must unavoidably sustain in the injury which their live-stock suffer from being exposed to the inclemency of winter storms, the damage which their crops are liable to from being lodged in insufficient houses, the immense quantity of dung which is thus either lost or rendered of very little value, and the increase of expence in general management, are, in a national view, great beyond all calculation.

The best situation, arrangement, &c. of farm-houses, and the advantages which are known uniformly to result from farmers possessing substantial and sufficiently extensive accommodation for carrying on their business, have already been brought under the reader's review, as well as the most economical way in which they can be erected.

Building proper farm-houses is not only a necessary

* See the Report of the County of Buckingham.

cessary mean of improvement, but one that must precede all others, granting of leases and forming of roads of communication only excepted; at the same time it appears equally evident, that farm-houses ought to be erected with a due regard to economy, whether the money be advanced by the proprietor or tenant. In neither case ought the sum expended to be greater than the tenant is enabled, from the superior accommodation thereby afforded, to pay the interest of; for it makes no difference, on general principles, whether the farmer sustains the loss of the interest by advancing the money himself, or whether he becomes bound for the yearly payment of it to the landlord. This rule is not, however, always attended to; farm-buildings are sometimes to be seen, in the erecting of which real convenience and utility seem to have been less attended to than show. When both can be combined without increasing the expence, and daily experience proves it to be practicable, they ought never to be separated; but when a tenant sinks his own money in building houses, or pays interest for that advanced by the landlord, it becomes his duty to consider, that convenient farm-buildings are better means of enabling him to reimburse himself of the money he has advanced, or to pay interest for that advanced by the landlord, than houses which, however much they may catch the eye of the pas-

ing stranger, are inconvenient and incommo-
dious to the occupier.

The only other observation that occurs as being necessary to be made on this subject is, that in all arrangements between landlords and tenants, in regard to erecting and keeping farm-houses in repair, the leases should contain covenants calculated as much as possible for uniting the interest of the parties in the preservation of them. By this means the farmer would be better accommodated during the period of his occupancy, and the landlord would avoid being subjected to heavy repairs at the entry of every new tenant.

II. Introduce the use of ploughs, and such other implements of husbandry, as are best calculated to perform the various operations with expedition and effect.

The principal instruments used in carrying on the husbandry of these kingdoms, as ploughs, harrows, carts, thrashing-mills, &c. have already been described; and notice has also been taken of the impolicy evinced by the proprietors of particular districts in not exerting every endeavour to excite a disposition in their tenants to introduce the use of such implements as in other districts have been found better adapted for performing

forming the various operations, and by the use of which the expence of cultivation and of general management have been greatly lessened.

The common Welsh plough, for instance, is perhaps the most awkward, unmeaning tool to be found in any civilized country; it is not calculated to cut a furrow, but to tear it open by main force. The share is like a large wedge; the coulter sometimes comes before the point of the share, and sometimes stands above it; the earth-board is a thing never thought of; but a stick (a hedge stake or any thing) is fastened from the right side of the heel of the share, and extends to the hind part of the plough: this is intended to turn the furrow, which it sometimes performs, sometimes not; so that a field ploughed with this machine looks as if a drove of swine had been moiling it*.

When it is stated, that the generality of farmers in the northern provinces of Scotland are their own plough-makers, it will be readily inferred, that many of the new ploughed fields in that part of the country must exhibit a similar appearance to that above described. It is not to be expected that a plough of any one particular construction, however perfect it may be, will ever be universally used in every district; but it is nevertheless reasonable to suppose, that

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* See Report of the County of Pembroke.

were the proprietors to exert themselves, ploughs so improved in construction, although varying in form, might be introduced as would perform the work in a superior manner, and not only in less time, but with the application of half the strength that is at present deemed necessary.

But it is not to Wales and the northern provinces of Scotland that ploughs of improper construction are confined; they abound also in a great number of the old improved counties in England, and to such a degree over the island at large, as to increase astonishingly the expence of cultivation. It is probable that, taking a general view of what may be called the Teams of Great Britain, not less than four horses, or six oxen, are, on an average, employed in drawing each plough; while, if the practice of particular districts is inquired into, as that of the south of Scotland, the counties of Norfolk, Northumberland, Durham, and a great part of Yorkshire, it will be found, that the ploughs are so superior in construction to the old-fashioned sorts generally used, that half the number of horses, or of oxen, are sufficient to do the same extent of work.

In the Report of the North Riding of Yorkshire, the practice of ploughing with only two horses is very properly stated as being well worth the attention of farmers in these counties where three, and often four, are unnecessarily used; and the

the reason is added, namely, "A Yorkshire ploughman will by himself plough full as much land in the same time with two horses, and full as well, as a *south countryman will with four and a driver.*" If this remark be well founded, and that it is, cannot be controverted, what an immense field for improvement opens to the view of the proprietors of Great Britain, who, by a little exertion, and a moderate degree of perseverance, might in a short time convince their tenants of the advantages to be derived from using well-constructed ploughs; which, if universally introduced, would lessen the expence of cultivation to a degree almost incredible?

From what was formerly stated, it is presumed the reader is satisfied, that, for carrying on the ordinary operations of husbandry, carts drawn by two horses are greatly superior to large, cumbersome, unwieldy, waggons, that require four, or five, or six, horses to move them along. It has of late been a subject pretty much agitated, whether single-horse carts are not to as great a degree superior to those drawn by two horses as these have been represented to be to waggons. Single-horse carts are certainly loaded and unloaded with much less trouble, and are in every way more easily managed, especially when carrying out dung, or when used for doing any odd jobs on a farm. It has also been found, from long experience, and the most attentive observation, that one horse, in a cart properly

perly fitted to its size and strength, will draw, on any road, *two-thirds* of the load that two horses, drawing in a line and of equal power, are capable of doing. The carters of the town of Falkirk, in Stirlingshire, for example, have long been famous for the great weights drawn by their carts *. Before the navigable canal between Forth and Clyde was made, the whole goods transported to and from Glasgow, and the ports upon the Forth, were drawn upon one and two horse carts belonging to these carters; the most expert of whom have long given the preference to carts drawn by one horse, as they experience no difficulty in carrying upon a cart drawn by a single horse, from Borrowstounness to Glasgow, a distance of upwards of thirty miles, and of indifferent road, from twenty to thirty-five hundred weight. It is further worthy of remark, that at the great iron-work at Carron, the company engaged in it formerly made use of waggons and waggon-ways to wheel their coals and other heavy articles upon; but have entirely laid aside the use of waggons and waggon-ways, and, on principles of economy, employed carters with single-horse carts to transport the heavy articles which they require †. For these reasons, as well as for others that might

* The same observation holds good in respect to Cumberland, where single-horse carts are chiefly used.

† See the Report of Stirlingshire.

might be mentioned, the writer begs leave to recommend to the improving farmers, to make such experiments as may satisfy themselves and the public in regard to what sort of carriage for general use is in every view most advantageous. That one must be preferable to another, as they differ so materially, is unquestionable. To know which, upon the whole, is best, is a matter of very considerable importance.

The more general introduction of thrashing-mills cannot be too strongly recommended, as, from the united testimony of those who have had experience of them, their utility is completely established. The numerous useful machines that have been lately invented, whereby manual labour, in carrying on various branches of manufactures, has been lessened, has tended to keep the price of those articles infinitely more moderate than they would have been had the same number of hands, that were formerly necessary to complete them, been still employed. By the same parity of reasoning, whatever tends to render less manual labour necessary in preparing grain for market, must not only tend to keep the price of that indispensable article more moderate, but also to yield the farmer a greater profit on its cultivation. On the whole, were light ploughs with cast-iron mould-boards, and carts of proper construction introduced, and were thrashing-mills erected on every farm on
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which grain to any considerable extent is cultivated, the expence of agricultural labour would be greatly reduced. It therefore merits the attention of those proprietors who take pleasure in cultivating a farm on their own estates to make experiments, with a view of ascertaining what construction of implements is best calculated for performing the various operations at the least expence of labour and money; for it is a well known fact, that, by lessening the expence of cultivation, the tenant is able to pay a higher rent; and consequently a great proportion of what is saved in that way goes ultimately into the landlord's pocket.

III. *Attend to the hours of labour, and to minute particulars, as well as to the general management of farms.*

The hours of agricultural labour in Great Britain at large are from six o'clock in the morning in summer to the same hour in the evening, and in winter from daylight in the morning till dark. There are some particular districts, as the Carse of Gowrie, &c. where labour commences at five o'clock in the morning in summer, and does not terminate till after seven in the evening. This may be properly denominated one of those beneficial practices which ought to be introduced in every part of the

the island. It is one method, and probably the most effectual that can be adopted, for keeping the expence of cultivation moderate; for as servants wages are every year advancing, unless farmers will resolve to reduce the number, and which can only be done with propriety by making those whom they employ work more constantly, and for a longer period, the rate of labour must soon increase to such a degree as to become a serious obstacle, not only to the general introduction of improvements, but in fact to the cultivation of grain in any way.

Increasing the hours of agricultural labour in a moderate degree cannot with propriety be considered as an oppressive measure. The people employed by the manufacturers are usually at work from five o'clock in the morning in summer till seven or eight in the evening; and it ought also to be remembered, that the maid-servants in farmers families commonly work from fourteen to sixteen hours every day throughout the year.

The importance of superintending farm servants in the manner best calculated to induce them to perform their labour with spirit and alacrity is well known; nor would it be less in favour of the farmers were they to adopt generally the resolution of increasing the hours of labour during the busy period at least; that is, from the beginning of March till the close of

harvest, or rather till the wheat-seed season is over.

The farmer who attends only to the general management of his farm, as seed-time and harvest for example, falls very far short of performing that duty which he owes to himself or to the community. There is perhaps no other business that, to conduct it properly, requires a more steady attention to minute particulars than that of husbandry. Every farmer should so arrange the plan of his work, that it may proceed regularly and without confusion, and in such a manner that proper force and attention may be applied to every part. This conduct would render farmers masters of their time; and every thing required to be done would be performed in the proper period, not delayed till the season and opportunity shall have been lost. The impediments arising from rainy days, from sick servants, from the occasional and necessary absence of the farmer, or from other causes, would in such case be of little consequence; these would not embarrass the operations of the farm, nor prevent the farmer from attending to the smallest concerns of it. In every view the making proper arrangements for carrying on the work must be advantageous to the farmer; and his being thus occupied, in place of going very frequently from home, would tend in a very material degree to promote his interest.

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pleasure (says the reporter of the State of Agriculture in the East-Riding of Yorkshire) in observing that severals in the district are sensible of the advantages resulting from such a conduct, and pursue it so themselves as to render my remarks unnecessary for their guidance." It would be a fortunate circumstance for farmers in general, as well as for agriculture, were they to follow the example of those in the East-Riding of Yorkshire, who are thus applauded for the attention they bestow on the proper management of their business.

IV. *Establish generally judicious Modes of Cropping.*

ALTHOUGH it is impossible to form any correct idea in regard to the extent to which the produce of the British soil might be increased, were judicious modes of cropping universally adopted; yet every person, who knows any thing about the management of land, must be sensible that it would be immense, perhaps one fourth at least. Certain it is, there are few subjects connected with husbandry that merit the attention of proprietors more than this; as nothing would contribute so much to increase the farmers returns, or more effectually secure the speedy, and, if persevered in, the permanent, improvement of the country.

It was formerly hinted, that the practice of adhering to regular rotations of cropping has hitherto been attended with effects more prejudicial than advantageous to British agriculture. Besides many modes of cropping that have been established in modern times, which, although perhaps well adapted to some soils and situations, are extremely improper in others, there are others still more improper, which have been adopted in different parts of these kingdoms for many centuries.

What can be more improper than the system of husbandry adopted in the open-field parishes in England? There are, it is true, various modes of cropping established in these parishes, but they are all nearly in the same degree improper. Two or three corn-crops and a fallow are the most generally adopted modes, and from which no variation can be made without the general and unanimous consent of all concerned. One obstinate farmer (and fortunate must that parish be considered where only one tenant of this description is to be found) has it in his power to prevent the introduction of any improvement, however beneficial it may appear to the other inhabitants. By this means, the introduction of artificial grasses and of turnip husbandry must be for ever excluded, without the intervention of the legislature; while the never-ending rotation of corn crops, to which the lands are subjected,

jected, must render them incapable of producing any tolerable returns. If to this be added, that the subsistence which the live-stock are able to pick from the natural pastures, set apart for that purpose, is so scanty as to render them of little value, when compared with those that are bred and reared in inclosed parishes, it is probable that the returns in grain and in live-stock are nearly double in an inclosed parish, under a proper mode of management, to what they are in one similar in soil, but which, owing to its being in the open-field state, is imperfectly or improperly cultivated.

More than one-fourth of the valuable and extensive county of Northampton remains at this day in the open-field state. What a defalcation must thence arise in the agricultural productions which that county, under proper management, is capable of yielding? What an astonishing additional supply of grain and cattle would be necessarily brought to the public markets, were all the open-field parishes in England inclosed and brought under regular rotations of cropping, and grain, turnips, and artificial grasses alternately cultivated? The British ports would then require to be opened, not for the purpose of importing the superabundant produce of other countries, but for exporting that of our own.

Scarcely less injurious to the interest of the public is that too general practice of laying down

a great proportion of a parish, when inclosed, in grass, and permitting it to remain for ages in a state of pasturage. These fields, when they are continued in grass a greater number of years than is necessary for refreshing them after having been worn out with a succession of exhausting corn-crops, become less productive, and consequently less profitable to the proprietor, the farmer, and the public, than if they were managed under any judicious system, by which alternate crops of grain, artificial grasses, and other ameliorating crops, might be cultivated in rotation. In the Report of the County of Leicester it is thus stated: "Some gentlemen think the plough cannot be introduced without pillaging their property, although the contrary would be the result under proper regulations, and to which the tenants would no doubt be glad to submit. There are many farms under this disagreeable predicament, on which, if a reasonable proportion were allowed to be in tillage, a considerable quantity of wheat, barley, oats, turnips, &c. would be annually raised; and the remainder of the land, when under a proper state of cultivation, would keep more stock than at present: the land would be improved, and both landlord and tenant equally benefited. From the best information that I could get, I understood that not one half of the corn consumed in the county was cultivated in it." It is also added
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in the same Report, "That a number of the pastures are shamefully over-run with ant-hills, and to so very great a degree, that in many of them the surface of one-third of the land is nearly thus covered. And if you ask a farmer the reason why he does not take them away, the constant answer is, 'We are not suffered to use the plough, and we cannot remove them without a very heavy expence by any other method; which will not answer, as I may very possibly never be repaid, being only tenant at will.'"

Although a pretty general adherence to grass husbandry may be highly proper on the western side of the island, where the climate is more moist and rainy; yet, in the interior parts of both kingdoms, and on the eastern coasts, where the climate is more favourable, there is perhaps no system of management that could be adopted more absurd than that mentioned above as being established in Leicestershire; and which, the writer knows, is by no means confined to that county, but, on the contrary, is prevalent over a great part of England, where a great proportion of the most useful land is allowed to remain in a comparatively waste and unproductive state.

Unprofitable as this mode of management must be considered by every intelligent farmer, yet there is no substantial reason for supposing that any general alteration will take place while the cause whence this pernicious practice originated

nated, namely, the payment of tithes in kind, is permitted to operate. For so long as the tithes from grass-lands continue inconsiderable in value compared to those collected from lands in tillage, it is not to be supposed that proprietors will permit their tenants to break up the old grass-lands, that the tithe-owner may have an opportunity of participating more largely in the profits that would arise from this change of system than he can possibly do according to the present mode of management. Were the tithe-owner's interest purchased by any proper previous arrangement, one great obstacle to breaking up of old grass-lands in England would be removed, as it would be then a less difficult matter for the proprietors and tenants of such lands to agree on the terms on which it would be for their mutual interest to break them up. That the breaking up and bringing these lands under a more approved system of management would greatly promote the general improvement of the country, and by producing a much greater abundance of grain and pasturage for cattle, tend to keep the prices for both moderate, must be obvious to those who have observed in how many places these old grass-lands are over-run with ant-hills, and how generally they produce either a coarse and unwholesome, or a stinted sort of herbage.

The only other improper system of manage-

ment that requires to be particularized here, is that by which the land is worn out and exhausted for a number of years with a succession of white-corn crops, and thereafter allowed to find grasses for itself. This system is not confined to one particular district: it is too generally adopted in the north of Scotland, a great part of Wales, and in some counties of England, as Cumberland, Westmoreland &c. The most prevailing system through the greatest part of Cumberland, and which is adopted on a large scale in the other districts above-mentioned, is to have a crop of white-corn every year while the land is kept in tillage. The cultivators make no fallows, except ploughing twice and manuring for barley can be deemed such.

Where a field is ploughed up from grass, they take oats, oats, barley, oats; or, oats, barley, oats, oats, barley, oats, &c. &c. for nine, or ten, or twelve years, and then it is left to produce natural grass for seven or nine years; for although some few farmers sow hay, or rye-grass seeds, and a little white-clover, the greatest number leave it to nature*.

When it is considered how great a portion of the lands of these kingdoms remains in the open-field state, is constantly in grass, or is subjected to the most scourging rotations of cropping that

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* See the Report of the County of Cumberland.

can possibly be devised, and how small a portion consequently is cultivated and managed in the manner best calculated to render it productive, it must be evident to every farmer of common understanding how, beyond all calculation, the crops of these kingdoms might be increased, both in quantity and quality, by the general establishment of such rules and methods of cropping as experience has proved, or as, from a due consideration of circumstances, are judged most likely to render the land to the greatest degree productive without exhausting it. Perhaps of all the lands in Great Britain that have been either anciently or recently cultivated, there is not above one-fourth of them under systems of management to which a jury of sensible, intelligent, improving, farmers could give their approbation: and while the management of another fourth might be considered by such a jury as greatly improved beyond what it was in former times, that of the remaining two-fourths would be found to be conducted in nearly the same way it was five hundred or a thousand years ago.

If, in consequence of the legislature exerting itself in removing the obstacles that bar the way to the introduction of agricultural improvements in England, the proprietors shall be induced to turn their attention to the due cultivation of their estates, they will soon be convinced that the union of clover and turnip husbandry, with the cultivation

cultivation of grain, is the means by which the soil can be rendered capable of producing the greatest crops; and that by obliging their tenants to adhere to rotations of cropping the best adapted, on a due consideration of soil, climate, markets, and other circumstances, for every particular farm, their own interest, as well as that of the tenants and the public, can be most effectually promoted. Without such regulations are universally adopted, improvements in agriculture, however much they may form subjects of conversation, never will, nay, further, they never can, become either general or permanent.

V. Accumulate as great a quantity of Manure as possible, and be attentive to the proper mode of applying it to the Soil.

TOWARDS the close of the Treatise on Manures, contained in the second volume, a comparative table is exhibited, by which may be seen at one view the different sorts used in each kingdom; and whence also may be learned how much more advantageously situated, and, in numerous instances, how much more attentive the farmers in some English counties are in procuring abundance of useful manures, beyond those in other parts of Great Britain.

To increase the quantity of manure, and to apply it to the greatest advantage, are very im-

portant particulars in the management of a farm, and to which the active and intelligent farmer will always bestow the requisite attention, as he must be sensible that it is on the foundation of manuring in a proper manner that any good system of husbandry can be established with effect. It is, however, an unquestionable fact, that there are few branches of rural economy in the conducting of which the British farmers in general evince less skill. A few farmers, it is true, may be found in every county, who, by superior industry and application, find it no difficult matter to amass an abundant supply of manure the year before they have occasion to use it; while others, not perhaps so fortunately situated, are so sensible of the advantages to be derived from applying manure in a proper state of putrescency, have the whole stock in their fold-yards carefully turned over as soon as the cattle are sent to graze in the spring; whereby a strong fermentation is brought on, and the dung reduced to a proper state to be applied to the fields intended for turnips the following season. But unfortunately, owing partly to the negligence of farmers themselves, and not less frequently to the parsimony of their landlords, who cannot be induced to furnish them with proper accommodations for their live-stock, a great proportion of the farm-yard dung, applied to the lands of Great Britain, does not contain half the essence,
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and consequently cannot have half the effect which otherwise it would. Many farmers, it must also be acknowledged, are as inattentive to the proper manner of applying dung as they are to collecting or preparing it. In many parts of both kingdoms it is laid on the fields at improper seasons; and, after being spread in the most slovenly manner, is allowed to remain exposed so long to the influence of the sun and winds, that its virtues are exhaled before it is ploughed in or made to incorporate with the soil.

The subject of manures, it was formerly mentioned, was extremely interesting; and, although hitherto but little understood, merits equally the attention of the theoretical and practical farmer. Perhaps no branch of the subject requires more investigation than the advantages derived from top-dressing, and the various sorts of manures that can be procured in different districts for that purpose. This would open a new field for the cultivation of lands, hitherto considered in a great measure barren; and, it is presumed, the practice of the Hertfordshire farmers in this respect requires only to be known to be imitated where practicable.

The following extracts from the Report of that county will show the advantages which the farmers derive from the practice of spring or top dressing their crops. "The spring or top dressings

dressings are the leading features of the Hertfordshire farming, and consist of foot, ashes, malt-dust, and oil-cake dust, or pulverized oil-cakes. The foot and ashes are brought principally from London, the malt-dust from Ware, Hertford, and other places, and the oil-cake dust from the different oil-mills in the county and neighbourhood. The foot is generally used on the wheat-crops, which have had no previous manure; it is laid in heaps on the crops in winter, and sown in the spring. The other top-dressings are housed and kept dry till used. The average price of the Hertfordshire top-dressings is as follows:

	Per statute acre,
30 Bushels foot, at 8d. is	L. 1 0 0
Ashes, the carriage, the chief expence may be about	0 10 0
10 Bushels oil-cake dust, at 2s. 6d.	1 5 0
40 Bushels malt-dust, at 1s.	2 0 0

These top-dressings not only supply the want of previous manure, but also, when crops are sickly and backward in the spring, occasioned either by bad seed seasons, frost, or other causes, are attended with wonderful success, and enable the crops to vegetate quickly, and to cover and protect the soil on which they grow from the droughts of the ensuing summer. To their almost *magical powers* the Hertfordshire farmers are principally indebted for their never-failing crops. Without entering into chemical analysis
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to discover the cause, they are satisfied with the effects ; and therefore continue to enlarge upon the practice, although attended with considerable expence. The provident farmer lays in a stock of these sorts of manures to answer contingencies ; and, provided with this treasure, he can remedy the evils of bad seed-times and seasons. These top or spring dressings are peculiarly applicable to poor, light, sandy, and gravelly lands, and of course to the production of the specifically heaviest corn, and put such lands more on an equality, in point of annual value, with stronger and richer soils. Happy would it be to more distant farmers, and to agriculture in general, could an adequate substitute to the Hertfordshire dressings be procured at an easy expence, and the application of that substitute perfectly understood."

From what is above stated, as well as from several observations formerly made when describing the various sorts of manures used in these kingdoms, the importance of farmers, not so fortunately situated in regard to the means of procuring large quantities of soot, malt-dust, &c. bestowing particular attention to finding out and using proper substitutes must be generally acknowledged. Of all others, none are likely to be procured in such quantities in the remote parts of Great Britain as the ashes of peat or turf ; which, although not perhaps in every case possessing

possessing such valuable qualities as was formerly mentioned, as being ascribed to those procured in Berkshire, could not fail, if kept dry in houses constructed for the purpose till used, amply to repay any trifling expence that could be expended in preserving them in a proper state, and sowing them over the land in the spring. In short, it would prove greatly in favour of agriculture, were the farmers in general to be more assiduous in procuring manure, and more attentive in applying it. Were that the case, quarries, of limestone and pits of marl would be discovered in almost every district; sea-sand and sea-weeds would be more generally used; and the best methods of recovering backward crops, by using top-dressings of various sorts, would be as generally known in other parts of Great Britain as they are now in Hertfordshire and some neighbouring districts.

VI. Be particularly careful to improve the breeds of the different species of live-stock.

It will be universally acknowledged, that, a few counties excepted, little attention has been hitherto bestowed in improving the breeds of the various sorts of live-stock. A disposition to introduce better modes of husbandry, and to render the soil to a greater degree productive, has pretty generally evinced itself; but while judicious

cious rotations of cropping are adopted, more or less in almost every district, whereby crops useful for man and beast are alternately cultivated, small is the number of British farmers who have been as attentive to improving the breeds of live-stock as to the cultivation of their farms. This disposition to improve the cultivation of our fields cannot, however, fail to produce in time other beneficial consequences. Every farmer who acts on prudent principles, will find it necessary, as a preparatory step towards improving the size and value of his live-stock, to increase the quantity and quality, as well as the variety, of his green crops. Without abundance of wholesome nutritive food at all seasons, the best breeds of horses, cattle, or sheep, will yield an inconsiderable profit, compared to what may be derived when they are furnished throughout the year with a sufficiency of those sorts of provender to which they are known to be most partial. Hence improved agriculture must precede improvements in the breeds and value of live-stock; and hence, too, there is every reason to expect, that as improved modes of culture become more general, the farmer's attention will be naturally turned to breeding those sorts only whence the greatest profit can be derived. It is well known, that the governing principle by which the conduct of those farmers is determined, who are in possession of farms where live-stock is bred and reared, is pro-

fit; consequently, in proportion as the difference in value, and annual returns between superior and inferior breeds are ascertained, in the same proportion will attention be bestowed to bring the flocks and herds to that degree of perfection which the situation of each particular farm will admit. No person can for a moment suppose it possible, that any species of live-stock can be improved to an equal degree on all soils and in every situation. It is in the more favourably situated districts only where the most perfect, and of course the most profitable, varieties of the different sorts of domesticated animals can be introduced with a certainty of success; yet by proper management improvements may be effected in the breeds of horses, cattle, and sheep, in every part of these kingdoms; and probably, all circumstances considered, to as great a degree in the remote and comparatively unproductive districts, as in those that are more fertile. It is not therefore the stock-farmers who possess the more valuable lands only, or those who are favourably situated in regard to markets, that would derive profit by introducing improved breeds of live-stock; every stock-farmer in the island, wherever or however situated, would promote his interest by devoting his attention to this important object. Those especially who possess the mountainous parts of England, Wales, and Scotland, are particularly called upon to be attentive

tentive to this only mean by which their farms can be rendered more valuable. The farmers in these districts, it is true, have no reason to hope that they will ever be able to introduce with advantage the heavy black cart-horse of Leicestershire, the large cattle of Lincolnshire, or sheep from the banks of the Tees that will weigh 40 or 50 lb. the quarter; the climate, soil, and general management, being extremely different, must necessarily render any such attempt abortive. This is no reason, however, why they should be negligent in improving the live-stock in the particular districts where they are situated. Let them attend to "climate, soil, and general management," and there is nothing to prevent them from either improving the native breeds, or introducing new varieties, if that shall be deemed more eligible.

The means usually adopted for improving the breeds of the different species of live-stock are, to select the best females from the breeds of the district, and to cross them with males of an alien or strange breed. Whether Mr Bakewell adopted this method in improving to so great a degree what may be called the Dishley breed of sheep, is, and probably ever will remain, a secret; although many people say, that it was by a cross with the Ryeland breed that his flock became so supereminent in symmetry of form, disposition to fatten, &c. Be that as it may, it is unquestion-

ably true, that for many years before his death he brought his sheep stage by stage nearer to perfection, by adopting an opposite system; namely, breeding, in the Leicestershire phrase, "in and in," that is, from the best individuals of the same family. With him it was not uncommon, nor is it with the principal breeders in the county where he resided, to permit the father and the daughter, the son and the mother, the brother and the sister, to improve their own kind.

As a general rule regarding the means to be adopted for improving the breeds of live-stock, the following appears to merit the consideration of every stock-farmer in the island. If the established breeds in any particular district are upon the whole superior to any other that can be introduced, and which, it is believed, will in general be found the case, although perhaps greatly degenerated in consequence of neglect, it becomes the improving farmer's business to select the best females he can find, either in his own or his neighbour's flocks or herds, and as these may be imperfect in some material points, he ought to spare neither trouble nor expence in procuring a male, either of the country or of an alien breed, the best qualified in appearance to correct the imperfections that are discernible in the females. Having so done, it only remains that he should in future select with care and judgment

judgment the superior individuals produced : and thus continuing to breed "in and in," he cannot fail in a few years to reap that reward in the increased value of his live-stock which superior attention merits, and which it usually receives.

The advantages that would result to farmers in general, were they to bestow a proper degree of attention to this important branch of husbandry, would be much greater than many of them are aware. Would it not be for their interest to breed and rear horses, whether for the coach, the road, or the plough, of strength and activity sufficient for these various purposes, and with such forms and constitutions as that they can be kept in good condition with the smallest possible expenditure of vegetable food, either of herbage, hay, straw, or corn ? How much more profitable would it be for farmers to breed well-formed, small-boned cattle, rather than such as are plain, coarse, large-boned, and ugly ? Those of the former description not only fatten quicker, and require less food, but, while their flesh is better in quality, a greater proportion of the weight of the carcase consists of prime joints, as rumps, ribs, surloins, &c. By what is the Dishley breed of sheep distinguished from all others ? "By their fine lively eyes, clean heads, straight, broad, flat, backs ; round (barrel-like) bodies, very fine small bones, thin pelts, and an inclination

tion to make fat at an early age *." Properties these which stock-farmers in every part of Great Britain must acknowledge are essential in the form and constitution of a valuable breed of sheep.

In short, viewing the various breeds of live-stock as the vehicles, which they certainly are, by which farmers are enabled to send their herbage, turnips, &c. to the various market-towns; how much therefore ought they to study, by the use of every proper means, to improve these both in form and in disposition to fatten, so that the produce of their farms may be disposed of on the most advantageous terms?

But besides the advantages which farmers, as individuals, would derive, were proper attention generally bestowed to improve the breeds of the different species of live-stock, those which would result to the community at large merit consideration. Were the breeds of cattle, sheep, and swine, improved in form and in fineness of bone, the quantity of offal, or, according to some breeders, "non-essentials," as legs, ears, horns, bones, &c. would be greatly reduced; and if to this were added a disposition to fatten at an early age, the markets of the country would be more abundantly supplied with animal food of superior quality; a more numerous population might
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* See Mr Culley's Treatise on Live-stock.

be supported in the island, while foreign nations might be partly supplied with the superabundance.

It has been said every inhabitant of England eats a sheep in the year. Suppose the inhabitants of Scotland to do the same, and that there are ten millions in both kingdoms. In that case, improving the breeds of sheep to the extent of one shilling each (and every person will allow this is practicable) would render that species of live-stock alone more valuable by L. 500,000 a-year than it is at present. How greatly then might the revenues of this country be augmented? What an immense source of additional wealth does the improvement of the different species of live-stock open to our view? And how assiduous ought proprietors and farmers to be in using the proper means to promote, in this respect, their own interests and that of the community?

VII. *Inclose such lands as are intended to be cultivated under an alternate course of grain and grass husbandry; and particularly all such in the fertile parts of the country as are devoted chiefly to pasturage.*

WHATEVER tends to meliorate any particular district must necessarily promote the public prosperity; and that inclosing has, in numerous instances,

instances, produced this effect, will not, it is presumed, be denied. Inclosing, in all its branches, besides furnishing employment for great numbers of the industrious peasantry, renders the soil more fertile, and of course the necessaries of life, as animal and vegetable food, more abundant. In so far, therefore, as the riches of a state may be said to consist in the number of its inhabitants, in so far is inclosing beneficial in a national point of view; as it is in those countries only where provisions are cheap, and which can never happen but when they are abundant, that population is to the greatest degree promoted.

The advantages resulting to landlords and tenants from inclosing and subdividing estates and farms, as security, shelter, improvement of livestock, increase in the annual value and produce of the soil, &c. were formerly mentioned at considerable length, as were also the obstacles that appear to prevent the more general introduction of this mean of improvement.

There are several millions of acres in the mountainous parts of this island so extremely barren and unproductive, that to attempt to improve them by inclosing would be absurd in the highest degree, as in many districts perhaps four or five hundred years purchase of the present established rent would be found inadequate to erect any sort of permanent fence. In these districts much may be done by draining, and by
improving

improving the breeds of the different species of live-stock ; but little can be effected by inclosing, except perhaps in a few particular places.

In some parts of the low country also, as the Carles of Gowrie, Falkirk, &c. where the climate is favourable, the farms and the fields divided from each other by open drains, and where the soil is found so much better adapted for tillage than for grazing, that four or five crops of grain are taken for every one of grass, inclosing with hedges may be deemed in a great measure unnecessary. But in the culturable part of Great Britain at large, especially where the lands are kept under an alternate course of grain and grass husbandry, or where they are devoted chiefly to pasturage, inclosing ought not to be neglected, as what may be termed the perfection of British agriculture, viz. the uniting the improvement of the breeds of live-stock with the due cultivation of the soil, never has been, nor never can be, established on an open-field or uninclosed farm.

VIII. *Drain off all superfluous Water.*

THERE is no way in which money can be expended in improving a farm that is naturally wet, whence the returns are more certain, speedy, or abundant, than when judiciously applied for the purpose of effecting a complete drainage. While a superabundance of moisture remains in

the soil, no exertions, however fertile it may naturally be in itself, can render it to a great degree productive. Much, no doubt, has been done in these kingdoms in the way of improving lands by open and under-drains; but it must also be admitted, that, notwithstanding the benefits that are known to result therefrom, much still remains to be done. None but the most ignorant farmers will plough or harrow lands when wet; while, at the same time, all are convinced of the advantages attending early sowing, especially in cold exposed situations: yet in how many instances do farmers neglect using the only mean, namely, draining off the superfluous water, by which they can be enabled to plough their lands in proper condition, and to sow the seed in due season.

The effects resulting from the introduction of a general spirit for draining are thus described by the gentleman who writes the Report of the County of Somerset: "The profit which has attended the improvement already practised during the last twenty years is, I should think, a sufficient incentive. Scarcely a farmer can now be found who does not possess a considerable landed property; and many, whose fathers lived in idleness and sloth on the precarious support of a few half-starved cows or a few limping geese, are now in affluence, and blessed with every needful species of enjoyment. Disorders

of

of the body, to which the stagnant waters heretofore subjected them, are now scarcely known, and the inhabitants for the most part arrive at a good old age." Effects nearly similar may be said to have been produced in the Carse of Gowrie, in consequence of proper attention having been bestowed in forming the necessary drains in that district; and such will ever be the result, where a country, or a particular farm of naturally fertile soil, but encumbered with superabundant moisture, is laid sufficiently dry for the purposes of cultivation or pasturage.

Many other instances, were it necessary, might be mentioned, in which the constitutions of the inhabitants of a district have been improved, and their wealth greatly increased, by means of effecting a complete drainage; and still a great many more in which the tenants of particular farms have enriched themselves by a liberal but judicious expenditure of money in effecting this very essential improvement. There are few proprietors or farmers in these kingdoms who have not experienced more or less, on their own estates or farms, the benefits derived from well constructed drains; or who have it not in their power to satisfy themselves in their immediate neighbourhood that such do actually result. That being the case, it is unnecessary to enlarge on the subject; as, if experience, example, and conviction, are not sufficient to stimulate them in-

to action, it is not to be expected that any thing which can be stated by way of advice or recommendation will with such people have any effect.

IX. *Form embankments for the purpose of reclaiming lands lying along the sea-shores, or adjoining the courses of rivers.*

THE immense addition that has been made to the extent of productive lands in several counties of England, by means of embankments judiciously and substantially constructed, and the benefits which the proprietors derive from that mean of improvement having been adopted, are well known. It appears therefore surprising, that those possessing lands occasionally overflowed either by the sea or by rivers in other parts of these kingdoms should not follow so laudable an example; and by erecting embankments, render such lands as are at present of no value to a high degree productive. Were they to view a neighbouring country (Holland), and see what art, industry, and exertion, are capable of effecting, in regard to reclaiming valuable lands from the sea, and in securing others from the injury that might be expected to arise from rivers overflowing their banks, they would be convinced how much they had it in their power to increase their own annual

nual income and the territorial revenue of the country.

The best methods of embanking lands, in so far as there was any reason to suppose farmers could ever be called upon to be individually concerned, has already been particularly described; and they are such, if adopted, as will in every case be attended with the most beneficial consequences. But besides numerous improvements on a small scale, which active and enterprising tenants might make by means of embanking, were they assured of permanency of possession for such a period as to repay the expence of labour, and afford a sufficient recompense for their trouble, immense improvements might be effected in this way, were it possible to rouse the proprietors of many parts of Great Britain from that state of sloth and indolence into which, unfortunately for the prosperity of the nation, they seem to have fallen. How many hundred thousand acres of naturally fertile fen or marsh land might be converted into useful tillage and pasture-fields, which are now occasionally overflowed by the sea or by rivers, were money judiciously expended, with a view of protecting them from future encroachments and depredations? How many people might be profitably employed in the cultivation and management of these lands? And what an immense addition might they be made to yield to the ordinary

nary supply of the public markets of the country? To these questions it is impossible for any person to give a proper answer, or indeed to form any probable conjecture on the subject, who has not travelled through the fens of Lincolnshire, and visited the Hundreds of Effex. There the business of embanking is more generally practised and better understood than in any other part of the island; but even there, owing to many concurring circumstances, negligence seems to be the order of the day; at least the reports of both these districts reprobate, in pretty strong terms, the present established mode of managing embankments. The writer of the Report of the county of Lincoln recommends to the proprietors to apply for an act of parliament to take the management of the embanking and draining the very valuable and extensive tract of low marsh land situated in that county from the commissioners of sewers, who at present have the charge; and that the management of both these operations should be placed in the hands of three or more commissioners, well skilled in the art of embanking and draining, who should be subject to the proprietors controul, and removable for misconduct. He also suggests the propriety of dividing this extensive fen into two or more districts, and of connecting the embanking and draining of each district together as if it was the property of one well-regulated family, making

making each respective part of the property contribute its share of expence in proportion to its share of advantages to be derived from any improvements. He then concludes thus: "If a plan of this kind were to be adopted, we should not see the occupiers of a frontage town letting their bank fall from wilful neglect, in order that, when it shall be condemned (by the commissioners of sewers), the whole level may contribute to the expence of a new one; in which expence their share would be less, as part of a large district, than otherwise in doing their duty by upholding their embankment as occupiers of a frontage town. We should not see the water held up by narrow passages, and crooked rivulets overflowing large tracts of high land, from the fear of letting it down upon works below, incompetent to carry it to the sea. We should not see some towns well drained, whilst others adjoining to them equally capable are overflowed. All these evils may be speedily cured, and an immense general saving had, by adopting a plan similar to this I recommend: For, by connecting the draining and embanking a whole country together, the works will be constantly attended to and well secured; the water will be collected together and carried off in larger bodies to the sea, by which means it will have competent power to scour out the outfalls." Whether the plan above described be the best that can possibly

be devised for remedying the evils complained of, the writer will not take upon himself to determine, although it appears to be arranged on equitable principles. At any rate, the present mode of management is to so great a degree defective, that there can be no question about the propriety of adopting some other more likely to be attended with effect. Nor could this be a difficult matter, were individual proprietors to sacrifice a portion of their private interest with a view of promoting the general improvement of the country ; but as this is not in every case to be expected, the intervention of the legislature in some shape or other seems indispensably necessary.

There are no wastes of any description capable of being improved to a greater degree than marsh or fen land on the sea-coast, and meadows or low lying lands that are occasionally overflowed by rivers. Of the former there are very large tracts in the south and east parts of England, and of the latter many thousand acres along the banks of rivers in the interior parts of both kingdoms ; a great portion of which, although capable of improvement, are allowed to remain in a comparatively unproductive state. To erect proper embankments, to cut the necessary drains, and to keep both in a perfect state of repair, would, no doubt, in many instances, be attended with considerable expence ; but the returns from such
lands

lands would be so abundant as to afford an ample recompense to the public-spirited proprietors, who possess good sense sufficient judiciously to conduct, and substantially to complete, such undertakings.

X. *Abolish the absurd practice of paring and burning.*

THIS pernicious practice, it was formerly observed, continues to be too generally established in England, although totally abolished in Scotland. Pernicious it may well be called; for although it may not be attended with all the bad effects that some have stated as resulting from it, yet it is demonstrable that this method of preparing land for the production of grain is never adopted on any farm where a rotation of cropping, the best calculated to render it to the highest degree productive, is established. When landlords are obstinate in preventing their tenants from breaking up grass-grounds in proper time, or when tenants are careless and inattentive in laying out these grounds again into grass, the practice may in such cases be defended. But it may be asked, are such landlords the encouragers, or such tenants the practisers, of good husbandry? No; the very reverse is the case. Establish judicious rotations of cropping, whereby the lands will be made to produce grain, grass, turnips,

&c. alternately, and paring and burning will get out of fashion. Continue to adhere to the imperfect modes of management above alluded to, and paring and burning will still be ranked as first-rate improvements. To render this the case, it seems necessary, however, that the predilection for ancient customs and prejudices, so loudly and so generally complained of, as tending to obstruct the introduction of better modes of husbandry, should continue to obscure the sight and darken the understanding both of proprietors and farmers. Those who are capable of seeing clearly, and of judging without partiality or prejudice, may, by surveying a well cultivated farm, under a proper rotation of cropping, easily satisfy themselves that paring and burning are requisite or proper only where the proprietors are too obstinate, or the tenants too ignorant to pursue better methods; and that good cultivation and proper arrangement, in regard to the order in which one crop should succeed another, completely prevents the necessity of having recourse to these extraordinary means of preparing land for tillage.

Mr Marshall, who, in describing the Rural Economy of Yorkshire, appears a strenuous advocate for paring and burning, delivers his sentiments on that subject, when giving an account of the husbandry of the west of England, with more circumspection. In the course of some

VI general

general remarks on paring and burning, or, as he calls it, "sod-burning," as applying to the practice of West Devonshire, he observes, "There needs not a better proof that the practice (of sod-burning), under the guidance of discretion, is not *destructive* to soils, nor any way *dangerous* to agriculture, than the fact so fully ascertained here, that after constant use of it, during perhaps a long succession of ages, the soil still continues to be productive; and under management, in other respects much below par, continues to yield a rent equivalent to that drawn from lands of equal quality in more enlightened districts: and there appears to me strong reason to imagine, that, *under the present course of management, sod-burning is essential to success*." With such reservations as are here specified, every intelligent farmer will agree with Mr Marshall, however much they might have been disposed to differ from him had he given his unqualified approbation to the practice; but he goes no farther than to say, that under the present course of management in that district, and which he describes as being "much below par," sod-burning is essential to success; nay, in the succeeding page but one he concedes the point still more, by stating, that "Whenever *clean fallows* and suitable *fallow-crops* shall be introduced and judiciously mixed

mixed with the grain-crops, agreeably to the practice of modern husbandry, *burning-beat* will certainly be no longer required." In other words, that it is only in the districts where agriculture is in a languid state, and where modern improvements are little known, or not thoroughly understood, that this, although ancient, yet slovenly and unhusband-like, method of preparing land for the plough continues to be adopted.

XI. Wherever the quality of the Water has been ascertained, adopt as generally as possible the beneficial practice of irrigating or flooding Grass Lands.

THE artificially irrigating, flooding, or watering of land, as a mean of increasing its fertility, is a practice that has been long established in some few particular districts, and whence the most singularly beneficial effects have followed; yet it is a practice little known in several parts of Great Britain, and which in many more was never heard of till after the establishment of the Board of Agriculture. It may therefore be considered, with much propriety, as one of those beneficial practices which that Board has brought into the view of the proprietors and farmers of these kingdoms at large. When treating formerly of this subject, the various circumstances necessary to be attended to in watering

ing or flooding land, as well as the numerous advantages that have been proved from experience to result, in particular districts, from adopting this method of fertilizing the soil, were particularized. It may not be improper to call to the reader's remembrance what is before stated on this part of the subject, in so far at least as to remark, that as all water does not possess the same quality, it would be a prudent measure in the first instance to ascertain to what degree that which can be commanded has the power of rendering land more fertile. This is necessary with a view of guarding the unexperienced practitioner from expending labour and money in preparing his fields for watering, when, from the indifferent, or perhaps pernicious, quality of the water which he has in his power to command, no good consequences can ensue. Wherever water has been proved to possess a fertilizing quality, a judicious application of it in flooding or watering the adjoining lands will be found a measure calculated to render them more productive than they could be made by the use of any other means. Keeping in view the above-mentioned hint, watering of land may, in numerous instances, be attended with certain profit to individuals, and at the same time facilitate, in a considerable degree, the general improvement of the country.

*XII. Improve the Climate in exposed situations, by
surrounding the Tillage and Pasture Fields
with extensive Plantations.*

BESIDES the advantages arising from planting waste and otherwise unproductive lands, derived from the sale of the trees at a future period, another of considerable importance, and more early attainable, is frequently derived. Such plantations, when judiciously formed, may serve as a screen to the arable and pasture fields, when, from the badness of the climate and their elevated situation, shelter becomes requisite. The improvements that have been effected in the northern parts of Scotland, in meliorating the soil of many districts, by surrounding the cultivated lands with extensive plantations of Scotch firs and other trees that are adapted to poor soils, and that will thrive in exposed situations, are so great, as ought to induce proprietors in other parts of Great Britain, where the climate is so unfavourable as to retard vegetation, and in some seasons to prevent the crops from arriving at maturity, to endeavour to improve by art what nature in this respect has left defective. On the utility of forming plantations for the purpose above-mentioned, it is unnecessary to enlarge; experience has long since decided the point.

Larch and Scotch fir will endure almost any severity of climate, and are therefore the trees of all others the most likely to thrive in bleak elevated situations. When the grounds to be planted are situated near the sea, considerable numbers of beech, as being capable of resisting the bad effects that usually arise from sea-breezes, ought to be added. These sorts of trees should be planted out on such grounds when young, and more than ordinary close to each other. When these directions are attended to, and the plantations made of such sufficient breadth as that the trees may not only prove a shelter to each other when young, but, when advanced in size, to the adjacent country, and when the plantations are thinned early and frequently, so that the remaining trees may be gradually inured to bear without injury that degree of cold to which they must necessarily be exposed, there is every reason to expect they will become profitable to the owners, and ornamental and useful to the country around. In short, were the practice of planting the elevated parts of the country more generally adopted, the climate would be so much improved that the tillage and pasture lands would be rendered greatly more productive, while an additional security would be obtained for reaping in due season the fruits of the year.

Such are the hints the writer has judged proper

per to throw out, with a view of calling the attention of proprietors and farmers to the more general improvement of the country. Were the obstacles formerly mentioned removed, and these means adopted, it would scarcely be possible to set bounds to the agricultural prosperity of these kingdoms, or to form an idea of the immense additional resources which skill, industry, and perseverance, are capable of drawing forth for the service of the state, and for the recompense of those individuals by whose exertions these improvements, if carried on, must be effected. It must, however, appear obvious to every person in the least degree acquainted with the present state of agriculture in Great Britain, considering the short duration of the leases commonly granted, and the uncertainty which farmers must feel in regard to permanency of possession, that under such circumstances many of the measures above recommended should be adopted by them. The truth is, that unless the proprietors come forward and take an active concern in effecting these improvements, there is every reason to believe the period is yet far distant when the British territory shall be improved to that degree of which it is capable.

Some of the measures above suggested, as planting, forming embankments, &c. ought, in every instance, to be executed at the proprietor's expence, and under the superintendence of his agent.

agent. There are others, as erecting farm-buildings, inclosing, draining, &c. which, when done at the farmer's expence, requires the expenditure of larger sums than they in general are able conveniently to advance, and which ought therefore to be effected at the joint expence of the parties. On a lease of moderate endurance (21 years, for instance), it may be considered a good general rule, that the proprietor should advance such sum or sums as may be requisite for the payment of materials and tradesmens wages, and that the tenant should furnish all necessary carriages at his own expence; so that while the tenant is allowed to reserve his capital for the purposes to which it ought to be applied, the proprietor is eased of a great part of the expence which otherwise would be necessarily incurred in carrying on these operations. While proprietors ought, on the one hand, to establish judicious modes of cropping, and to abolish the absurd practice of paring and burning, both proprietors and tenants ought to bend their attention to introduce the use of the most improved implements of husbandry, and to be careful to improve the breeds of the different species of live-stock; and tenants in particular should be attentive to the hours of labour, and to the accumulation of as great a quantity of manure as possible. By thus acting, proprietors and tenants will discharge their respective duties to each o-

ther, to their families, and to the public; and while they do so, they will ensure, as far as in the nature of human affairs it is possible to do, the improvement of the country.

Having now as briefly as possible thrown out some hints regarding the leading particulars to be attended to, in order to effect the further improvement of the country, it is intended, before closing the chapter, to make some remarks on the best means to be adopted for encouraging that spirit for introducing new and better modes of husbandry which appears at present in many districts so general.

XIII. *A spirit for agricultural improvement, how it may be still more generally excited.*

THAT such a spirit does at the present period appear to be excited, and that generally too, at least among proprietors and farmers in particular districts, and to a degree hitherto unknown in the annals of Great Britain, is a fact well established. There are, however, several extensive districts where both proprietors and tenants remain in the most torpid state, insomuch that it will require the utmost exertions of the legislature and the Board of Agriculture to rouse them into action. To point out the means by which this can be best effected shall be the subject of some following pages. In the mean time, it ought

VI. to

to be remarked, that unless the legislature shall turn its attention to the removal of those obstacles that have already been particularly described as operating against the improvement of the country; and unless the proprietors shall come to the general resolution of allowing the farmers to act more as free agents, by granting them leases of moderate endurance—every other means of introducing into, or establishing in, the minds of that class of men a disposition to adopt the new and more improved modes of husbandry must be attended with consequences such as may be expected to result from attempts so impotent in their nature, and so little calculated to heal the wounds which the agriculture of these kingdoms, from inattention in these respects, has already received: In short, they can be of no avail.

Farmers are very frequently charged with being stupid, obstinate, and attached to ancient customs. Although such accusations, when generally applied to any class or description of men, are always improper, as never being strictly true; yet it cannot be disputed, that, in regard to a great proportion of the cultivators of the British soil, these charges are but too applicable. The reason is obvious. Although in every county there are many farmers who, from the intelligence, activity, and liberality of sentiment which they possess, would do honour to any profession;

still it must be acknowledged, that the majority, from having been deprived of a suitable education, having little business to call them from home, and very few opportunities of visiting distant districts, remain in consequence in a great measure, if not entirely, ignorant of the improvements going forward in other parts of the island, and equally so of the manner in which these have been effected. Bred up with very confined ideas, both in regard to thinking and to acting, it is no wonder, partly for the reasons above-mentioned, and partly through that prejudice which, so situated, they must necessarily possess for the customs of their fathers (which in time naturally become their own), that improvements in agriculture should move on more slowly than those in the other arts. The manufactures of the country, for instance, could scarcely be carried on at all with success but under the direction of people who had acquired a good education, and who, in consequence of their intercourse with mankind, had become divested of all local prejudices.

It is indeed true, that the more intelligent farmers, in many instances, have introduced improvements, and adopted the better practices of other districts, with advantage to themselves and to the public. But unless the clouds of ignorance, under which the prejudices entertained by the description of tenants above-mentioned

were nursed, are by some means dispelled, they will, in all probability, continue to consider such deviations from *the good old beaten tract* as acts of folly rather than of propriety. It therefore appears necessary, in order to excite what may be called a general spirit for improvement, that proper measures should be adopted for disseminating as widely as possible agricultural knowledge.

Of books on the theory and practice of this art there are abundance; but few, very few, are calculated to convey useful local information. In conducting the operations of husbandry, so much depends on soil, climate, seasons, and numerous other circumstances, that it is almost impossible that directions laid down in books of agriculture, written by those who confine their observations to the practices of the particular districts where they reside, can ever become useful to that practical farmer who, in regard to soil, climate, &c. is very differently situated. Since the establishment of the Board of Agriculture a mass of knowledge has been obtained, which no private individual could ever have become possessed of, even by the most extraordinary exertions.—What measures the members of that Board intend to take in order to disseminate the knowledge so acquired, the writer has no access to know. That it is their intention to do so by some means or other, and
more

more generally than they have hitherto done, no person can doubt. It would be preposterous to suppose, that any general benefit could be derived from pursuing the plan they seem for the present to have adopted; namely, that of selling the reprinted Reports of each county at 5 or 6 shillings the copy. There are eighty-five counties in England, Wales, and Scotland; consequently a complete set of the reprinted Reports would cost above *twenty guineas*. While the information obtained by the Board shall continue to be held at such an *extraordinary price*, there is no reason to suppose the British farmers will be much benefited thereby; and less still for thinking that by such means the clouds of ignorance, which cause in the minds of ordinary farmers so great a predilection for ancient customs, will ever be removed. Without other measures be adopted, they must live and die in the possession of these prejudices, however much their doing so may operate against the best interests of the country.

To render the information contained in these Reports beneficial to the nation, it appears indispensably necessary that every ordinary farmer, those for instance possessing 30, 40, or 50 acres, should somehow or other be put in possession of it. Without this be done, it will remain, like gold in the bowels of the earth, of no value to them, whatever effects the exertions of the members of
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the Board may have in spreading a spirit of improvement among the more intelligent farmers. A small number only of those who are at present regulated in their conduct by ancient prejudices, can be expected to derive much benefit or knowledge from the institution of that Board, unless the members will promulgate the information which they may from time to time obtain.

The writer has long been convinced, that, for the purpose of conveying useful information to farmers in the middle and lower ranks, the instruction of which he has at present chiefly in view, periodical publications, such as the *Museum Rusticum*, the *Scots Farmer*, the *Annals of Agriculture*, &c. if executed with judgment, are more likely to be attended with success than many others which, to the more intelligent, may appear to possess superior merit. It is in vain, in his opinion, to expect that men, who are little in the habit of reading, and who cannot reason on causes or effects, are to be informed by a perusal of abstract disquisitions on any subject. If such men are to be instructed, it must be by a plain, simple, unadorned, detail of facts, which ought to be made as concise and distinct as possible; while, at the same time, the propriety of their attending to these facts should be enforced by such reasons as are within their comprehension, and which, on once examining, they can easily comprehend.

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If these observations be well-founded, there is perhaps no method the Board of Agriculture can devise for the circulation of knowledge on subjects connected with husbandry, that carries with it a greater probability of success, than were they to establish a society of three or four people, respectable for their knowledge of the various practices adopted in different districts, and who, from their general acquaintance, would insure a very extensive correspondence with people most eminent in the farming-line throughout the island. It should be the business of such a Society to publish an Agricultural Periodical Journal, under the patronage and sanction of the Board; and which should, in the first place, be made to contain a concise account of the different methods of carrying on the various operations of husbandry in both kingdoms. This, with such additional information as the Board would be daily receiving, together with useful hints from correspondents, would afford abundant materials for such a publication for many years. With a view that it might with more certainty get into the hands of those (the middle and lower classes of farmers) who would be most benefited by a perusal of it, it should be sold on the lowest possible terms, that is, for the expence of paper and print. One of these journals should be published regularly every fortnight or three weeks; and as the Board does not want the means of forwarding them

them at a trifling expence, nor the proprietors of the country influence sufficient to induce their tenants of all descriptions to become regular purchasers, the extent of the circulation would be immense, and the advantages resulting therefrom would be greater than can at present be well imagined. Such a publication, conducted as, under such circumstances, it no doubt would be, coming from so high authority, and circulated regularly and to such an extent in every district, would have a most astonishing effect in divesting the great body of farmers of that partiality for ancient customs which is so generally complained of, and which, while it remains, were every other obstacle removed, will still retard the improvement of the country. Were some such plan as this adopted, farmers in general would not only soon become open to conviction, but solicitous to obtain a greater share of useful information. These dispositions would also naturally pave the way for what, in the writer's opinion, ought to be the next measure adopted, with a view of exciting a general spirit for improvements, namely, the establishment of agricultural societies.

It is long since societies for promoting improvements in agriculture were established in some parts of Great Britain. It is probable the most ancient one in Scotland was that which met at Ormiston in East Lothian, and which is taken notice of in

the Statistical Account of Granston in the following words :

“ Sir John Dalrymple of Corelland and Mr Cockburn of Ormiston, both of them distinguished by zeal for their country and a passion for agriculture, established a Society at Ormiston, which had for its object the improvement of husbandry. Besides actual farmers, persons of the first rank in the country were proud of being enrolled as members of that club. The Duke of Perth and John Earl of Stair regularly attended its monthly meetings*.”

The agricultural societies in England, so far as the writer has been able to learn, are all of modern institution. In the Report of Brecknockshire in Wales, mention is made of a respectable agricultural society in that county, which was instituted upwards of forty years ago. And it is to the exertions of the members of that Society, both individually and collectively, that the reporter ascribes the rapid advancement which agriculture

* It is not a little remarkable, that while the former nobleman, the Duke of Perth, during the rebellion 1745, was employed in deluging his native country with blood, by fighting the battles of the Stuart family, he at the same time evinced a solicitous regard for its agricultural improvement, by sending a guard of soldiers to protect the persons of the members of the above-mentioned Society at their monthly meetings; a most convincing proof that in the other case he acted on *what he conceived* principles of propriety and justice.

culture has made in some particular parts of that district since the period above-mentioned.

The most extensively useful agricultural society at present in Great Britain, is that established some time ago at Bath, called "The Bath and West of England Society." Under the direction of the secretary of that Society, seven or eight volumes of very valuable miscellaneous papers, on various subjects connected with husbandry, have been published; a perusal of which will satisfy every person that much care and judgment have been exercised in the selection.

There have been two societies also lately established in Edinburgh; the one, which has for its object the improvement of wool, is denominated "The British Wool Society;" and the other, which was established for the purpose of improving the husbandry of the Highlands of Scotland, is known by the name of "The Highland Society." How far these societies have answered the ends proposed by their institution, none but the members are capable of forming any judgment. But as, in the writer's opinion, the usefulness of all such societies is in a great measure to be calculated by the extent of agricultural knowledge which they communicate, and as few or no publications have hitherto been made by either of these two above-mentioned, it is to be presumed that, however much the members themselves may have become enlightened, their exertions

have hitherto had but little influence in regard to introducing generally new and better modes of husbandry.

Agricultural societies of every description, except in a few particular cases, where the influence of the members had the effect to procure accurate information respecting the practices of other districts, were till of late extremely limited in their powers of doing good, or of promoting the objects they had in view. Previous to the establishment of the Board of Agriculture, the knowledge of the methods generally adopted in the various parts of the island for carrying on the operations of husbandry, were little known beyond the narrow limits of the district where they were established. In regard to a knowledge of the modes in which a particular operation was conducted in different districts, all was doubt and uncertainty. The case is, by the exertions of that Board, very much altered: The practices of every district are now so minutely described, that an intelligent farmer, by the perusal of the printed Reports, and by comparing one with another, and with the practices most prevalent in the district where he resides, has it in his power to obtain such a fund of information as cannot fail to render him a more valuable member of such a society than he could have been by any other means.

That a society, or societies in each county
composed

composed of proprietors and principal farmers, must tend greatly to the dissemination of useful knowledge, every person must be satisfied. Such societies, when the members possess a thorough knowledge of agriculture in general, and a just sense of the importance of the cause, for the promotion of which they had become united, and having also the means (as, if such periodical journals as above-mentioned were regularly published, they would have) of procuring much valuable authentic information, as well from various parts of these as from other kingdoms, would have it in their power to render the most essential services to mankind in general. The members, while they communicated their sentiments and the result of their experiments to each other, would not only thereby receive instruction themselves, but they would also be the means, through the medium of the proposed agricultural journals, of dispersing the knowledge of many important facts relating to husbandry throughout these kingdoms, or rather throughout the civilized world at large. "Would gentlemen (says a sensible writer in the Scots Farmer) turn their attention to these things, a very great improvement would soon appear upon their estates at a very trifling expence to themselves; and they would have the heart-felt satisfaction of promoting the happiness of their tenants, and the good of the public, along with their

their own interest :” And he adds, “ I cannot help thinking that a gentleman of fortune, presiding at the head of a Board, and all his tenants around him, with hearts full of admiration at his condescension, and of gratitude for his goodness, must appear to the thinking part of mankind in a more splendid and brilliant character, than if he was to preside at an assembly or a ball of the first gentry, or to hold the first place at a King’s court *.”

The first object of these provincial societies, like that of the Board of Agriculture, ought to be to excite a spirit of inquiry among the middle and lower ranks of farmers : were that effected, it would render the publication of agricultural journals peculiarly proper and advantageous. Of this we have the most convincing evidence in the conduct of the peasantry and artificers in Scotland, in regard to another particular. By some artful means a spirit of political inquiry was lately excited among them, whereby they became extremely anxious for information. By the circulation of low-priced publications on the subject of politics, they were gratified to the utmost extent of their wishes. The consequences that have resulted are well known ; they have almost to a man become politicians. Were equal pains taken in regard to agricultural affairs,

* Scots Farmer, vol. i, p. 289.

affairs, similar consequences would necessarily ensue; and the British farmers would soon be entitled generally to the denomination of intelligent and expert husbandmen.

The next measure to which the members of such societies ought to turn their attention, is to encourage a spirit of emulation, by conferring in some cases honorary, and in others pecuniary, rewards on those who, by the display of superior skill or exertion, shall be found best entitled to receive them. It is by the proper distribution of premiums that agricultural societies are likely to become generally useful in any district. Premiums for the best constructed implements of husbandry, for the best ploughed field, for the best breeds of horses, cattle and sheep; to the farmer whose farm shall be found on inspection to be upon the whole in the best state of management, &c. would have the effect to excite a spirit of emulation and improvement among all ranks. But it is necessary to remark, that premiums should be devised with great caution, and by those only who have a perfect knowledge of the subject. Premiums may be most impartially adjudged and bestowed; yet, unless the arrangement be both judicious and comprehensive, the beneficial consequences resulting therefrom may be very limited. Without care be taken in this respect, a small number only of the farmers of any district can become competitors with any
well

well founded probability of success. In the Report of the County of Brecknock, before-mentioned, it is stated, "That nine-tenths of the inhabitants of that county have no chance of ever being benefited by the distributions of the premiums given by the agricultural society to those who excel in the various branches of husbandry, as they can never presume to become candidates." And it is added, "The occupiers of the small portion of good land, which this county contains, must always have the premiums. The inhabitants of the hilly parts in some places scarcely yet know that there is such a society in existence; so little intercourse is there between the inhabitants of the rich and poor districts of this county." It is unnecessary to make any observations on the impolicy of adopting such a line of conduct; it must be sufficiently obvious, and cannot therefore be too much guarded against by the members of those societies, who wish, by their labours, to promote to the greatest degree the improvement of the country.

The only other particular that appears to merit attention, as a mean by which a general spirit for agricultural improvements may be most effectually introduced, is the establishment of experimental farms. This measure was formerly hinted at, as being one that there was every reason to believe would be attended with good consequences, in regard to determining with precision

cision the proper quantities of the different manures that ought to be applied to the various soils, the kinds best adapted to each, and the effects they produce when applied singly or in their compounded state *. But the utility of public experimental farms in every county, if put under the management of men of extensive knowledge and experience, ought not to be estimated by a reference to any particular branch : Husbandry, in all its branches, would be greatly improved by such establishments. And should the period ever arrive when the obstacles before-mentioned shall be removed, and proper means adopted for diffusing a general knowledge of the best modes of conducting the various operations connected with that science, the one now suggested will not be omitted. Such farms would become so many seminaries, at which youth might be instructed in the art of agriculture ; and to which also the practical farmer would occasionally resort for information, regarding the success of experiments made as it were under his own eye, and on soils and in situations similar to his own.—Mr Marshal, in his Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, has thrown out many useful hints on this very interesting subject. He states the advantages which the farmers of Great Britain at large would receive

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* See vol. ii. p. 258.

from the establishment of farms of this description in the following words: "What man, whether of the superior class of yeomanry or tenants, or of the superior class of tradesmen or others, who are now bringing up their sons to husbandry, would not, after his son had gone through a course of private tuition, and received the rudiments of instruction from himself or some professional friend, wish to perfect his education in a public seminary; where he would have not only an opportunity of seeing practice in its highest state of improvement, and of conversing with professional men of the most enlightened understanding; but where he would be duly initiated in the theory of rural knowledge, in the method of making, registering, and observing the result of experiments; of ascertaining the inherent qualities, and improving the various breeds of live-stock; where he would see order and subordination, and learn the proper treatment of servants; and among a variety of other branches of useful knowledge, the form and method of keeping farm-accounts, and of ascertaining with accuracy the profit or loss upon the whole and every part of his business, consequently of bringing it as nearly as in its nature it is capable of being brought to a degree of certainty?" Such are some of the advantages that may be expected to result from establishments of the above description, if properly managed. Of their importance

importance every intelligent reader must be sensible, and at the same time convinced, that were the previous measures above recommended to the consideration of the Board of Agriculture to be adopted, no plan is more likely to promote effectually the laudable and patriotic intentions of the members who compose that Board; nor any that has a better chance of producing in time a complete reform in the modes of conducting the various operations of husbandry in these kingdoms. It is with peculiar satisfaction that the writer has it in his power to congratulate his countrymen on the establishment of one such experimental farm at least. In the Report of the County of Leicester it is mentioned, that the members of the agricultural society, which meets at the town of Leicester, have agreed to rent what they call an experimental farm; and which they propose to put under the management of the most intelligent practical farmers in the county. There is therefore no reason to doubt but that, in the course of a few years, many useful experiments will be tried on this farm, and much light thereby thrown upon the more important branches of rural affairs.

The establishment of such farms in every county would no doubt be attended with considerable expence, especially at the outset. But whoever will coolly reflect on the advantages that must necessarily result from such establish-

ments, will readily agree, that a portion of the public money could not possibly be more usefully expended; as such a measure, taken in conjunction with those before suggested, would secure, as much as in the nature of things it is possible, the complete improvement of the country.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Miscellaneous Observations, containing some Remarks on the proper Management of Estates.

IT was intended in this Chapter to have brought several subjects under review, that are either entirely omitted in the former part of the work, or mentioned in a cursory manner only; but this the writer finds it impossible to do in the limits he originally prescribed to himself. He shall therefore confine his observations to the statement of a few particulars respecting the proper management of estates; which being of great importance to the agriculture of the country, he considers as meriting the attention both of proprietors and their agents.

The management of an estate is a trust that, to discharge properly, requires the agent to be conversant in country business in general, and with the various modes of conducting it in the particular district where he resides. Without this

this be the case, he must be often regulated in his conduct by the advice and opinion of others; some of whom may very probably have an interest in deceiving him. This appears to be the chief reason why so many of the county reports contain complaints against proprietors for employing persons residing in towns to superintend the management of their estates. When this happens, it is ten to one if the interest of landlord or tenants, or the speedy and permanent improvement of the property, become steadily the objects of such agent's attention. The management of estates, with agents of this description, can only be a secondary object. Their other avocations render it frequently impossible for them to devote that attention to minute particulars, which, to execute the business in a proper manner, is indispensably necessary. But, suppose they had it in their power to bestow the requisite attention, yet it is impossible, considering their situations and habits of life, that they can become thoroughly acquainted with what may be called improved practical husbandry; and that being the case, it is equally impossible their agency can prove profitable either to the proprietor, the tenants, or the public. It will be found, by the perusal of the following pages, that, in conducting the affairs of a considerable estate, many circumstances must necessarily occur that require the skill and attention of professional men,
and

and which those who are either strangers to country business in general, or who are not well acquainted with all the local circumstances necessary to be attended to on these occasions, are incapable of arranging on terms equitable for the parties concerned, or in such a manner as to insure the introduction of improved agriculture.

In describing the various duties that fall to be discharged by the agent of an estate, it may not be improper to suppose him in the management of one on which it is intended, by new arrangements, to introduce a more improved system of husbandry. So situated, the most important business in which he can be engaged is, 1st, To let the estate into farms of proper size; 2dly, To ascertain the rent or yearly value of each farm; and, 3dly, To lease them to such descriptions of tenants, and on such terms and conditions, as to insure, as far as in his power, the speedy and permanent improvement of the whole.

In regard to the first particular, enough, it is presumed, has been already stated*, to convince every intelligent reader, that the greater variety there is in the extent of farms, the more extensively will the general interests of the nation be promoted. In determining the proper size of farms on particular estates, several circumstances require attention. If they be distant from markets;

* See Vol. I. p. 402, &c.

kets; if the soil be generally of indifferent quality; or if, from the backward state of husbandry, considerable capitals be required to execute the proposed improvements; and if these are in whole, or in a great measure, to be effected at the tenant's expence—the farms ought to be larger than when, from vicinity to markets, the superior quality of the soil, and the improvements that have been previously effected, less exertion and capital are requisite for their due cultivation. This has been proved true from general experience. On inquiry it will almost invariably be found, that lands of the former description are never cultivated to advantage, unless when let in pretty large farms, and to tenants who possess intelligence, exertion, and capital; whereas farms of a more moderate size, when favourably situated, in regard to markets, of good soil, and well improved, may, and often do, turn out profitable to all concerned.

With few exceptions, estates of considerable extent contain a great variety of soils. The agent, in all such cases, ought to be careful, where it can be done with any degree of propriety, to unite some of the bad land in the same farms with the soil of superior quality; by this means the improvement of the whole will be secured. The writer has had occasion to perambulate estates in both kingdoms; where, in the arrangement into farms, the agents had pursued an opposite

posite line of conduct ; where the good and bad lands had been carefully separated from each other ; and where, to add to the absurdity of such management, the good lands were let in large farms to wealthy tenants, while a set of poor people, without substance, and consequently without the power of exertion, were employed in improving the least improvable parts of the property. On the impropriety of such arrangements it is unnecessary to enlarge. Such conduct must appear in the highest degree reprehensible to every person who is competent to judge of the subject.

In dividing estates into farms, agents have many opportunities of cutting off corners and pieces of land of irregular surface, that are of little value either for tillage or pasturage, but which, if planted with trees, would become both useful and ornamental. As the command of wood on an estate, even if it does not extend beyond the supply of what is necessary for erecting farm-buildings and constructing implements of husbandry, is an object of very great importance, the allotment of the otherwise unimprovable spots for the growth of timber is therefore a circumstance that ought always to be kept in view when making arrangements with a view to effect the complete improvement of an estate.

It frequently happens, in establishing a general plan for the improvement of an estate, that

that plan might be greatly improved by a judicious exchange of some parts of the lands for others belonging to adjoining proprietors. In some instances the expence of inclosing might be greatly lessened; in others, a more complete power of drainage might be obtained; in others, again, a quarry, or some other natural advantage of immense importance, if annexed to the estate, might be procured on fair and equitable terms. These are objects which, if attained, would operate so powerfully towards the improvement of many estates, that intelligent agents, when so employed, ought always to consider them as of the highest importance.

When the general improvement of an estate is proposed, and the agent receives directions to let it into farms of proper size; as the groundwork of these improvements, the state of the roads, among other important particulars, demands his attention. These, it will, in many cases, be found necessary to alter. When new ones are formed, it ought to be in such directions as to afford the greatest possible degree of general accommodation; as, wherever an agent deviates from this rule, and lines off roads so as to afford an additional share of accommodation to some farms at the expence of others, he deviates from the path of rectitude. Good roads, formed in proper directions, are of immense importance in facilitating the improvement of an estate.

estate. The advantages resulting from enjoying an easy means of communication with the market-towns are too obvious to require explanation; nor is it of less importance, that roads leading to the nearest marl-pit or lime-quarry should be formed in the best directions, and kept in the most substantial state of repair.

The only other circumstance to which it is proposed to call the reader's attention on this part of the subject is, that, in making such general arrangements on estates where neither limestone nor marl have been discovered, it is a necessary and proper part of the agent's duty to employ experienced people to search for them. Were this rule generally attended to, many valuable treasures of both, which hitherto lie undiscovered, might soon be brought into public view; and while a prudent use of them would to a certainty ensure the improvement of the estates on which they were discovered, these improvements would necessarily be the means of throwing into the public markets an extent of superabundant produce, of which none but those who are acquainted with the effects produced by the judicious application of lime or marl can have any conception.

An agent who is capable of making these previous arrangements with judgment and discretion, and who is besides intimately acquainted with the numerous local circumstances that in a

great measure regulate the value of land in every district, will not find it either a difficult or arduous undertaking to determine what ought to be the rent of every particular farm, according to the difference that may appear in the quality of the soil. No sensible person, however, will expect that the writer is able to lay down rules which can be in any degree useful in regulating the conduct of individuals in this respect. Besides the quality of the soil, the nature of the climate, the situation of the estate in regard to markets—the general state of agriculture in the particular district, and various other local circumstances, merit consideration in determining what ought to be an equitable rent for a farm; to which may be added, the duration of the proposed lease, the nature and extent of the improvements which the tenant is to become bound to effect at his own expence, the accommodation in regard to houses, &c. &c. It can only be after a due consideration of all these particulars, that even the most intelligent agent can in any case determine with propriety what should be the rent of an estate or a farm. One general rule ought never to be departed from by those who act as agents in determining the rent of lands; they ought to consider themselves as arbiters appointed mutually by proprietor and tenant. Those whose situation leads them to determine in these matters, while they have this impression

impression on their minds, will never act but according to the principles of honour and justice: They will consider themselves bound to estimate, on the one hand, all the advantages of which the farm is possessed; and, on the other, all the disadvantages to which it is, and during the tenant's occupancy, necessarily must be subjected. Having so done, the conclusion must be fair and equitable. This line of conduct, however, those only who may be denominated *free agents* have a power of pursuing. In too many instances, it is well known, agents, in place of having an opportunity of exercising their own judgments, are mere ciphers, in regard to the part they are allowed to act, in determining the rents of farms. Sometimes, when a spirit for agricultural improvements has become general in a district, and sometimes from other causes, when the lease of a farm is about terminating, the agent receives numerous proposals for a renewal, together with offers of rent greatly exceeding that which he would himself have demanded. Under such circumstances, he naturally applies to his constituent for directions how he should conduct himself. Many proprietors, it will be admitted, act, in letting their estates, as merchants do when they are disposing of their goods: The agent is of course directed to close with the highest offerer. This it becomes his duty to do; and although he may do it without making any com-

mentary on the conduct of either party, yet it is with a full conviction on his mind that they both acted improperly ;—the farmer, in having made so high an offer, and the landlord, in accepting what was more than, under the existing circumstances, an adequate rent.

The fixing fair and equitable rents on farms, where he is left at liberty to do so, is no doubt an important branch of an agent's business ; but many others merit an equal degree of attention. The description of tenants, whom he ought to treat with for leases of farms in preference to others, ought, after he has arranged an estate into proper-sized farms, to be the next object of his consideration. On this subject it is unnecessary to say much : every agent must be sensible of how much importance it is to introduce active, spirited, and intelligent farmers on an estate, although possessing perhaps somewhat limited capitals, in preference to those who have nothing but capitals to recommend them. By this observation, it is by no means intended to hint that an investigation into the state of the farmer's capital, before concluding a bargain, is not a necessary part of the agent's duty : on the contrary, from what the writer knows, he is satisfied it is essentially necessary ; and were the rule rigidly adhered to, fewer speculations in husbandry would misgive than do at present, or rather

ther all improper speculations would by that means be effectually prevented.

It is unquestionably the duty of an agent to ascertain, by every proper means, that the tenant, with whom he is about to conclude for the lease of a farm, is in possession of funds sufficient for stocking it, and for completing such improvements as it may be necessary for him, owing to particular circumstances, to undertake; but it does not follow, that when two or more candidates appear for the same farm, an agent ought invariably to prefer him who has the heaviest purse. It may and does often happen, that the man, who is possessed of funds that are deemed no more than sufficient for the undertaking, may possess also spirit, activity, and an uncommon share of exertion; whereas another, who may have three times the other's capital, is indolent and inactive in the extreme. That agent, who, in letting farms on improving leases, would prefer the latter to the former, may be pronounced very little qualified for superintending an estate. In ascertaining the qualifications of farmers, another circumstance deserves regard: Some farmers have a peculiar genius for attending to the breeding, rearing, and general management of live-stock; others confine themselves almost entirely to the study of the best methods of cultivating grain; while others, again, can divide their attention so equally between the cultivation

tivation of grain and the management of live-stock, that they can make more of a farm under that system of management than under either of the other two. To assign to the stock-farmer the management of a farm devoted chiefly to the cultivation of grain, or to the corn-farmer the charge of a farm on which the breeding and rearing of live-stock must necessarily be the chief object of attention, or to deprive the other of an opportunity of combining with advantage the improvement of the breeds of the different species of live-stock with the due cultivation of the soil, must, without having recourse to reasoning on the subject, at once appear absurd. Yet, in practice, how often does it happen that the natural genius of the farmer is cramped from his being placed in a situation where he cannot exercise it? In short, if the improvement of the estate be the chief object, prudence in assigning to farmers such farms as they are best qualified to manage, is not less necessary than judgment in determining what ought to be the fair and equitable rent.

The only other circumstance above-mentioned, as naturally falling under the consideration of an agent who is employed in the management of an estate intended to be let under improving leases, is the terms and conditions in which it is to be let, so as to insure, as far as in his power, its speedy and permanent improvement. Had not
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many of the particulars necessary to be attended to in making such arrangements been previously enlarged upon in the course of the work, this would have opened a wide field for discussion; but, taking it for granted that these are in the reader's recollection, what appears proper further to add shall be compressed into as little bounds as possible.

When entering on a treaty for a lease, *where that liberal mode of bargaining with tenants is established*, the first question generally respects the proposed period of its endurance. The writer's opinion on this subject has been fully explained, nor is he under any apprehension that intelligent proprietors or agents will be disposed to controvert it. Circumstances may indeed occur, where, owing to the particular situation of the proprietor, he is obliged to load the tenant with the expence of houses and other necessary improvements; and in consequence to grant him a lease for a greater number of years; but, as a general rule, leases of about twenty years endurance appear to be the most equitable. If they be permanent for a period much beyond that, the landlord's interest must suffer, both from the depreciation which experience proves to be rapidly taking place in the value of money, and from the improvements that are regularly, although gradually, taking place in the modes of conducting the various operations of husbandry.

dry. If, on the other hand, they be for a much shorter period, the tenant has it not in his power to reap the fruits of his industry. It therefore becomes a duty incumbent on the agent to fix on some general rule in regard to the proper duration of leases; and equity demands, that that rule should be established on such principles as to secure as much as possible the separate interests of the parties most materially interested.

Proper accommodation, in regard to houses, falls next under consideration. Whether new houses are necessary, or whether those already upon the farm may be rendered sufficient by some additions and repairs, is the agent's province to determine, or at least it is a part of his duty to assign substantial reasons to his constituent and to the tenant why he holds the one or the other opinion. He ought also to be able to judge with precision, in regard to the extent of houses necessary for accommodating a farmer who proposes to rent a certain number of acres to be managed according to a given rotation of cropping. Besides this, he should be so well acquainted with the rate of labour and the price of materials, as to be able to ascertain with considerable accuracy the sum that would be requisite to procure the necessary accommodation in either case. And, lastly, if his constituent becomes bound to advance money for the purchase of materials, and to defray the expence of labour in erecting

erecting new buildings, or in repairing the old, and which, for the reasons formerly mentioned, ought uniformly to be the case, it necessarily becomes his business to take care that the houses be placed in a central situation, substantially constructed, and formed of good materials, and that the tenant comes under proper and explicit obligations in regard to the state in which he is to deliver them over to the proprietor at the expiry of the lease.

Whoever has made the introduction of improved modes of agriculture an object of study, must be fully sensible of how great importance it is to fix upon and establish proper rotations, in which the various sorts of crops may succeed each other with the greatest advantage to the cultivator, and with the least injury to the soil. There are few particulars regarding the management of estates, on which their substantial improvement so much depends, as on establishing judicious modes of cropping, and on making it an invariable rule that these be rigidly and steadily adhered to. For reasons formerly mentioned, it is impossible to lay down general rules for fixing on modes of cropping best adapted for any particular district. But that agent must be deficient in professional knowledge, who cannot, from his own experience, aided by the information he can acquire from others, fix upon such as, all circumstances considered, are in every particular

case preferable to others. The truth, however, is, that scarcely one half of the agents in Great Britain give themselves any trouble about the matter. They seem, like the lower class of farmers, to be wedded to ancient customs. So long as that continues to be the case, and that they remain ignorant of the advantages that result from adopting judicious rotations of cropping, agriculture, under the guidance of such men, must languish. Intelligent agents well know, that no mean has hitherto been adopted which has had a more direct tendency to secure the permanent improvement of an estate, after better modes of culture have been introduced, than obliging the tenants to adhere to regular and proper rotations of cropping. It is therefore the duty of every agent, who regards his own character, the improvement of the estate committed to his charge, or the interest of the community, to establish generally, wherever he has the management, such modes of cropping as are best calculated to promote the mutual interests of landlord and tenant, and most effectually to prevent such improvements as have been introduced from taking a retrograde motion.

Respecting the other circumstances that require the agent's attention in making arrangements of this kind (as, for instance, the proper periods of entry and removal, the species of rent and terms of payment, inclosing, draining, &c.),

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the writer's sentiments have been so fully stated in other parts of this work, that it would be improper again to bring these subjects under review.

In framing agreements between landlord and tenant, the agent ought to study perspicuity of language, and to avoid by all means the insertion of those slavish clauses and covenants which too often disgrace deeds of this nature. In short, a lease (as has been formerly observed) should contain nothing but what can at any period be construed a fair, equitable arrangement between the parties; and which should be stated in language so plain and explicit, that every person of ordinary comprehension may be able to understand what was the full intent and meaning of the parties at the time. Were this line of conduct more generally adopted by those who are in the habit of framing leases, numerous disputes and expensive litigations would be avoided, and peace, harmony, and a proper understanding between landlords and tenants, more uniformly subsist.

Although the dividing of an estate into farms of proper size, and letting them to tenants of proper descriptions, and on terms the best calculated to ensure its speedy improvement, be very important branches of an agent's business; yet other matters, not less so, fall under his management, and demand a share of his attention.

When an estate is arranged and let in the manner

manner above-mentioned, it is no doubt one great step towards its improvement. But, in place of the agent's trouble being over when he has completed the agreements, he will find, if he performs his duty, that it is increased in a ten-fold proportion. It was not only necessary for his constituent's interest that such arrangements should have been made; but having been made, it is equally so, in order to secure the object that gave rise to them, that the tenants shall, with spirit and alacrity, implement their part of the agreement. Hence it becomes the agent's duty, by superintending the improvements carrying on in the various parts of the estate, to satisfy himself that they are done in proper time; in a substantial manner, and according to the tenor of the agreement. Should he observe any of them carried on in a superficial manner; if from design, it is his business to check such proceedings; if owing to ignorance, he ought to be able, from his superior knowledge and intelligence, to direct in in what manner they should be conducted. In short, an agent in the management of an estate, recently let on improving leases, if he pays due regard to the important trust committed to him, will find both his time and attention fully occupied.

The receiving of rents, where these are regularly and punctually paid, is a very easily managed part of an agent's business. Where, from the

the low state of agriculture, and the consequent poverty of the country, the rents are paid in trifles, and irregularly, and particularly when it becomes necessary to enforce payment by legal means, the doing so cannot fail to be the most irksome and painful of all his duties. While, on the one hand, too great forbearance is apt to lead many tenants into a careless indifference respecting their situation, and to prevent that degree of exertion which alone can extricate them from their embarrassments; over rigidity, on the other, frequently brings ruin on the tenants, and discredit on the farms. The law, by securing to the proprietor a preferable claim on the tenant's effects to the extent of the year's rent, for three months after the last moiety of it becomes due, points out, in the clearest manner, the line of conduct which agents in such cases ought to adopt, and the extent of credit which they are warranted to give beyond the period when, by the stipulations in the lease, the rent actually became payable. While the proprietor remains the preferable creditor, the agent has no occasion to have recourse to legal measures to enforce payment; but although that be the case, he should, in the mean time, by reasoning with the tenants, and pointing out to them the perilous situation in which they stand, endeavour to rouse them into activity; whereby they may be induced to exert themselves in such

a manner, that a settlement may be effected previous to the period, beyond which it would be committing an act of injustice to the landlord were the agent to grant further indulgence. Experience has proved, that much of the ease or difficulty of collecting rents depends on the general tenor of the agent's conduct: If he acts in a cautious, discreet manner, the business, in most cases, may be completed without much trouble or noise; but if he gives way to malice or passion, or if he be so imprudent as to disclose the affairs of such of the tenants as he may have reason to consider in a perilous situation, he not only acts in a manner unbecoming the station in which he is placed, but diametrically opposite to the interest either of landlord or tenant; while he at the same time adds to his own trouble by increasing the difficulty of obtaining payment. It is not in receiving rents only that an agent ought to exercise his prudence and discretion; the general tenor of his conduct ought to be such as is best calculated to secure the confidence of his constituent on the one hand, and the esteem and respect of the tenants on the other. By a steady adherence to his constituent's interest, an unremitting exertion to render the situation of the tenants comfortable, and a determined resolution to forward the improvement of the estate, ought all his actions to be regulated. While he keeps these three great objects in view, it is impossible

fible but his conduct must meet general approbation; nor can he fail, thus acting, to attain that which he must consider his highest honour to have attained, namely, the confidence of his constituent, the esteem of the tenants, and the merit of having forwarded in a great degree the improvement of the estate committed to his charge.

Nothing promotes the general cause of agriculture more than giving proper encouragement to improving tenants; such as keep their farms in neat good order. Wherever an agent observes this to be regularly and uniformly the case, it is his duty to represent it to his constituent; and at the same time, by affording all reasonable assistance, to induce the tenant to make still greater progress towards perfection. When such a tenant's lease is near expiring, it is an act of justice and sound policy, by a renewal of it on reasonable terms, to give him a substantial proof of the preference he holds in the esteem both of landlord and agent. As he has improved the farm, he is not only more likely than any other man to set a proper value upon these improvements, but also, by his future good management, to render them permanent. But this is not the only good consequence that would result from granting a new lease to such a tenant: the doing so would excite a spirit of emulation among

the others, and the more general improvement of the estate would be thereby effected.

While an agent ought to endeavour to excite, and to encourage when excited, a spirit of industry and improvement among the tenants under his charge, he ought to make it equally his study to discountenance, in the most pointed manner, all those who are indolent and slovenly. Such a conduct, on his part, may have the effect to rouse characters of this description into action, when every other means would prove ineffectual.

One other circumstance, connected with the management of an estate, and the peace and comfort of the individuals concerned, shall be mentioned as meriting the agent's attention: That is, his avoiding, by every possible means, the instituting of vexatious law-suits, either at the instance of the landlord against the tenants, or at the instance of one tenant against another. Nothing can stamp more discredit on the conduct of an agent than evincing a disposition to make frequent appeals to courts of law. There is not one dispute of a thousand that arises respecting the management of an estate, or country affairs in general, that involves in it a question of law. That being the case, there are few, be they of what nature they may, that could not be more equitably adjusted by a reference to sensible men residing on the spot than by the ablest

ablest judge that ever sat upon a bench. Impressed with this idea, it should be the business of every agent, when disputes unfortunately do arise, to use his utmost exertions to bring the parties to agree to refer the determination of them to one or two intelligent impartial men, who, from the degree of local knowledge which, by residing in the neighbourhood, they must necessarily possess, are of all others the most competent judges, and the best enabled to decide impartially.

Besides the various particulars before stated, and which respect rather the minute than the general management of estates, it is the duty of those into whose hands the regulating and managing landed property is committed to bestow a share of their attention on those that will be afterwards mentioned; as, the proper management of woodlands, hedges, public drains, embankments, inland navigations, turnpike-roads, &c.

On many estates the proper management of woodlands is a matter in which the proprietor's interest is very materially concerned. While Great Britain abounded with forests and woodlands, these, when not allowed to remain in a neglected state, were committed to the charge of the farmers who possessed the adjoining pasture or tillage lands, and who were understood to have liberty to fell such timber trees, and to cut such coppice-wood, as they required, either

for building or repairing houses; for inclosing or making implements of husbandry, or for fuel. The now almost general destruction of the ancient woodlands, added to an increased population, the extension of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture; and the consequent introduction of more polished manners, have of late years greatly increased the demand, and of course enhanced the value, of timber of every description, and rendered such lands as are occupied as woodlands more productive to the owners than they were at any former period. This has had the effect to induce the proprietors to exclude their tenants from any concern in the charge or management of woodlands; and to place them under the care of a description of men called foresters; and whose conduct is, or at least ought to be, superintended by the agent of every estate where such woodlands are situated.

It was formerly mentioned as being part of an agent's business, when arranging an estate into arable, pasture, woodlands, &c. to select such parts of it for planting as could be rendered most valuable by being devoted to the growth of woods. It is also necessary, in order more effectually to promote the interest of his constituent, that he acquires a competent knowledge of the species of trees best adapted to the various soils and situations. This is practicable without his be-

ing

ing professedly either a nurseryman or a gardener. If, by an attentive survey of various parts of the district similar, in respect to soil and climate, to that of the estate under his charge, he discovers that some sorts of trees thrive better than others, he has nothing to do but permit nature to be his guide in regard to the selection of those plants that experience has proved to possess a peculiar aptitude for such soils and situations: By doing so, it is impossible he can greatly err. Besides this, he ought to acquire a general knowledge of the proper periods for thinning plantations, and of the safest and least expensive method of performing the operation. He should also be expert at measuring timber-trees, so as to be able to check any fraud intended to be practised by the forester or others; nor should a tree be permitted to be felled on the estate without his consent or him having previously given positive instructions thereanent.

In order to manage some estates to advantage, it is indispensably necessary that the agent should not only know the most approved method of making new coppices, but also be acquainted with various other particulars regarding woodlands of that description, especially the most proper age for cutting the underwood or coppice, according to the uses to which it is to be applied; so that the land thus occupied may turn out to the greatest degree productive.

Con-

Considering the immense increase that has taken place of late years in the price and value of wood, the spirit for planting that has evinced itself in various parts of the country, and the great reason there is to expect that it will become general, there are few matters connected with the agency or management of estates to which those who propose qualifying themselves for that situation ought to devote more attention than to the proper management of woodlands. Those who do so, those who acquire knowledge sufficient to enable them to direct the whole procedure from sowing the seeds in the nursery to felling the trees in the forest, will have no reason to repent either of the time or expence bestowed in the attainment of this sort of knowledge.

To the management of hedges, and indeed to the general condition of all other fences on the estate, it is the agent's duty to be attentive. If it has been found necessary, for the reasons already mentioned, to devolve the charge of woodlands to persons in the immediate employment of the proprietors, others equally powerful have it is presumed, been assigned, when treating of fences in general, why it should be considered a part of the agent's duty particularly to attend to the state and condition of the fences. Thorn fences especially should be put under the immediate charge of one individual appointed by the landlord, and the agent of course ought to keep

keep a watchful eye over his conduct. Unless this be the case, it is not probable that this great mean of improvement will be carried into effect without much additional labour and expence; or if so, that such fences will prove useful or permanent.

Public drains, embankments, inland navigations, turnpike-roads, and all other works tending to the general improvement of the district, as well as of each particular estate, fall under the review of the agents of such estates as are to be in any degree benefited either by the establishment or the permanency of these works. It is not sufficient for the agent of one of these estates to be able to say, "I have done my duty," if the public drains leading through the estate under his charge be kept in complete good order. That may be the case; but if they be rendered less efficacious, by obstructions of any kind being allowed to impede the course of the water in its passage through other estates, it is equally his duty to adopt the most prudent, and at the same time the most effectual, measures to have these removed.

Although the embankments opposite to his constituent's estate be kept in the most substantial state of repair; yet if he discovers, and does not make the proper representations, that other parts of the work are falling so rapidly into decay as to threaten, if not speedily repaired, the
total

total annihilation of these improvements, which had probably been effected at much labour and expence, such agent, should a catastrophe of this sort happen (and such have happened), cannot consider himself completely exonerated by being able to say, "I am not individually to blame." In all such cases, it is an agent's duty to consider himself as having a general superintendence over the whole, as well as a particular one over those parts of the works that are more immediately under his charge.

No person will dispute the infinite advantage which the agriculture of various parts of the country derives from the accommodation afforded by inland navigations. By these the superabundant produce is transported to distant markets at little expence or trouble; while coal, manure, wood, iron, &c. are brought back in return, and on terms equally, if not more, moderate. Still, however, several of the English reports afford ample proof that these canals or inland navigations, although generally beneficial, are in many particular instances extremely prejudicial: That while the interest of the proprietors, whose estates are situated at a little distance from them, is promoted, that of those through whose lands they pass is greatly more injured than any convenience derived from the use of them compensates. Several causes operate to produce this effect; as, the negligence of those
who

who frame the acts of parliament; the owners of the navigation having separate and often opposite interests from the proprietors of the lands through which the canals are formed; and not unfrequently the inattention or neglect of agents. The agent of an estate, through which canals are formed, should be extremely watchful of the conduct of the canal owners. Their interest, it is well known, can in many cases be effectually promoted only by adopting measures that have a direct tendency to injure that of his constituent. That being the case, the agent ought on all such occasions, by a proper and spirited line of conduct, to repel every attempt towards encroachments; it being much more for his constituent's interest to prevent the estate from being injured, than, when injured, to apply to a court of law for redress.

The only other branch of public business connected with the management of country affairs which it appears necessary to mention, as claiming a share of the agent's attention, is that which respects roads of communication from one district to another, whether turnpike or not. Unless these be substantially formed, and kept in a proper state of repair, every attempt to introduce, far less to establish, spirited agriculture, will be in vain. That these should be formed where necessary, and afterwards kept in good order, is for the interest of commerce and manu-

factures, as well as for that of agriculture. But by whom are such improvements to be suggested? or, when suggested, by whom are they to be executed? Not by the merchants or manufacturers certainly, but by the country-gentlemen, or by those acting for them. It is therefore obvious, that roads and all other public works within the district ought to be considered by agents as falling under their management; for although in some districts indeed the proprietors themselves bestow a laudable attention to the forming and repairing roads and other public works, yet this is by no means generally the case. Some proprietors reside at a distance from their estates, or have estates in various districts; others fancy themselves so great, as to render it impossible for them to attend road or other public meetings (unless some political question is to be agitated), without disparaging themselves; while others, again, from indolence, or a consciousness of their ignorance of all country affairs, commonly absent themselves: so that the number of districts is comparatively few where the meetings, called for the purpose of concerting measures for the establishment or repairs of public drains, embankments, inland navigations, roads, &c. are numerously attended by the proprietors.

So standing the fact, it is unnecessary to use much reasoning to convince the reader, that those who are properly qualified for superintending the
ma-

management of estates, should possess, if not ingenuity to devise such improvements, at least penetration competent to judge of their probable effects, and abilities equal to direct in the execution. Unless they possess these qualifications in a greater or less degree, they must be sanguine indeed in their expectations if they expect to rise above mediocrity in the line of their profession. But at what school, it will probably be asked, can a thorough knowledge of all these particulars be acquired? The writer hesitates not to answer, that he knows of none established in Great Britain for the purpose. Lectures, it is true, are regularly delivered in the University of Edinburgh by the gentleman who fills the office of professor of agriculture, and who is, beyond doubt, the best agriculturist in the island: but these, although highly instructive to his pupils, being confined chiefly to the various branches of practical husbandry, have consequently little or no relation to the general management of estates.

As long as the executive government continues to bestow so little attention to the improvement of the national territory, those who propose to qualify themselves for undertaking the management of estates must content themselves with picking up information on the subject the best way they can: but if the day shall come when the folly of supporting commerce and manufactures at the expence of agriculture shall become

generally evident, then the legislature will allocate a fund for the establishment of experimental farms in various parts of these kingdoms. When these shall be established, they will prove the best schools for the education of young men who have a view of being afterwards employed in the general superintendence of estates. There they will have the advantage not only of conversing with those who have studied the subject scientifically, but occasionally with those also who have been for years engaged in the management of estates.

While the system of stock-jobbing was confined to the *bulls* and *bears* of Change-alley and the monied men in and about the metropolis, the relative value of land, compared with that of government stock, was an investigation whence, when completed, few people could have derived much benefit. Now, however, matters are very much altered. In these times every man possessing a few hundred pounds, even in the remote parts of the kingdom, has become a stock-jobber. In place of lending his money on legal interest to some person in the neighbourhood, who, from his extent of trade, industry, and general good character, was entitled to credit, he sends it to London, and directs his correspondent to purchase navy-bills, 3 *per cents.* &c. Every individual who possesses money acts prudently in doing so, because he draws a higher interest

interest than the law allows him to demand in any other case *; while, at the same time, he has it in his power to convert the government security into money at any period when he conceives he can use it to more advantage. It is therefore peculiarly the duty of agents to acquire a correct idea of the relative value of land, compared with the current price of government stock : and with a view of enabling them to make the necessary calculations with facility, a table is hereto annexed ; nor will the intelligent reader consider it the less valuable or useful, when he is informed that it is borrowed from a common annual pocket-book.

A

* The writer has often heard it gravely and positively asserted, nay, offered to be proved as clear as mathematical demonstration could make it, *that the national debt was the national riches*. It may be so : it may be a proof of the riches of the nation, that the executive government is obliged to give eight or nine *per cent*, interest on every new loan, while a private individual dare not demand more than five under the severest penalties. This is mathematical demonstration with a witness ; but so stands the fact.

A Table of Equation of Stock, with the corresponding Value of Land.

Bank Confol. 3 per cent.	S. Sen Stock. 3½	Bank Conf. 4	Bank Confols. 5	India Stock. 8	Bank Stock. 7	Yearly pur- chase of Lands.	Annual In- terest. per cent.
3 per cent. Confol. at 60 are equal	to 3½ at 70						£. s. d. 0 5 0
		80	100	160	140	20	5 0 0
61½	71½	82	102½	164	143½	20½	4 17 6
63	73½	84	105	168	147	21	4 15 2
64½	75½	86	107½	172	150½	21½	4 13 0
66	77	88	110	176	154	22	4 10 10
67½	78½	90	112½	180	157½	22½	4 8 10
69	80½	92	115	184	161	23	4 6 11
70½	82½	94	117½	188	164½	23½	4 5 1
72	84	96	120	192	168	24	4 3 4
73½	85½	98	122½	196	171½	24½	4 1 7
75	87½	100	125	200	175	25	4 0 0
76½	89½	102	127½	204	178½	25½	3 18 5
78	91	104	130	208	182	26	3 16 11
79½	92½	106	132½	212	185½	26½	3 15 5
81	94½	108	135	216	189	27	3 14 0
82½	96½	110	137½	220	192½	27½	3 12 8
84	98	112	140	224	196	28	3 11 4
85½	99½	114	142½	228	199½	28½	3 10 2
87	101½	116	145	232	203	29	3 9 0
88½	103½	118	147½	236	206½	29½	3 7 9
90	105	120	150	240	210	30	3 6 8

From

From this effort, feeble as it may be deemed by some, to delineate the office of an agent, and to enumerate the various particulars to which, if he discharges his duty with propriety, he ought to bend his attention, may be inferred, that this office is not like those of placemen or pensioners, but one that affords full employment, and which, to discharge the various duties connected therewith, requires attention, exertion, and perseverance : A business which can be conducted with effect by those only who have read mankind and their manners at various schools, and who, besides a knowledge of rural affairs in general, are also capable of directing in the more minute branches of practical husbandry.

If such qualifications be requisite in those who are entrusted with the management of estates, who can be surprised that so many of the county reports contain complaints against proprietors for employing attorneys and other persons not duly qualified? Who can be surprised that the conduct of proprietors in this respect should be represented to the Board of Agriculture as operating against the general introduction of improvement? When the management of estates, and other matters connected therewith, are devolved on people who, from their constant residence in towns, are hardly capable of distinguishing between one species of crop and another, far less of giving directions how any one

piece of business under their charge ought to be executed, that of receiving the rents only excepted, how can it be supposed that a general spirit for improvement is to be introduced? It is utterly impossible. As well may it be expected that a mere practical farmer may become intuitively an expert attorney, as that an attorney, or other person who resides constantly in a town, can conduct with advantage the affairs even of a very moderate estate.

CONCLU-



CONCLUSION.

THE national and private advantages that may be expected to result from the introduction of a general spirit for undertaking agricultural improvements, and the necessity of the legislature bestowing particular attention to that most important object, having been already fully explained, it would be improper again to enter at length on the discussion of these subjects.

In any nation where it has been ascertained that the population is rapidly increasing*, and especially where, after the most minute investigation, it has been found that the country has not for the preceding twenty years produced food sufficient for the support of the inhabitants, it certainly becomes the duty, and ought to be the chief study, of the legislature to adopt every means calculated to excite a general spirit for improving the national territory. The executive government of a country so situated, which does not pursue the measures that appear proper to be adopted in such a case, particularly when

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these

* This has been done in the most satisfactory manner, in regard to Scotland, by Sir John Sinclair in his Statistical Accounts of that kingdom.

these are suggested and recommended in the most pressing manner (as has been recently done in this country by persons delegated as it were by each district for the express purpose *), cannot be said to discharge conscientiously that trust which, for the general good of the community, is reposed in it by the constitution.

Whether the members of the lately established Board of Agriculture shall have so much influence with those who hold the reins of government, as to induce them to turn their attention from ruinous and destructive wars and foreign conquests to cultivate the peaceful arts at home, time only can discover. But were that to happen; were the present most expensive war terminated but six months only sooner than, with a view of effecting a peace on what may be conceived the best possible terms, it may be; and were the money thus saved to be expended in improving the waste lands of these kingdoms—what immense advantages would result? Were the crown lands, or more properly the wastes annexed to the crown, to be sold in the manner before suggested, what an additional security would such a measure afford to the constitution and for the improvement of the country? How many

* The persons appointed to survey the different counties, and to report the state of agriculture in each, the obstacles that impede further improvements, &c.

many hundreds, or rather thousands, who have their capitals at present floating in the public funds, would then bring them *to anchor* on the British soil? And while they became more active and useful citizens in times of peace, they would to a man exert themselves to keep entire that order of things by which their property would be most effectually secured. Were the legislature to devote but one month to the arrangement of the laws which at present operate so powerfully against the prosperity of British husbandry, those only who have travelled through Great Britain in search of agricultural knowledge could form any idea how much improved in a short time would be the situation of the proprietors, the farmers, and the community at large.

The writer had many opportunities of making journeys through various parts of both kingdoms, for the purpose now mentioned, long before the Board of Agriculture was established; and more at the expence of that Board than any other individual in the island. He feels himself therefore warranted, from his own knowledge of the fact, to assert, that that Board is a noble institution; and that if it be properly supported by the executive government, it will be productive of the most beneficial consequences. But if it shall turn out that the executive government adopted the hint of making such an establishment, merely for the purpose of “throwing out a tub

to divert the whale," that is, with a view of amusing the people, who were at the period engaged in contemplating the *beauties* of "Paine's Rights of Man," the result will prove it to have been a measure founded on false principles*. It is well known there were many farmers in England who, fifteen or twenty years ago, thought, the want of leases, the payment of tithes in kind, the poor's rates, &c. were no great hardships, nor that wastes and commons were any material loss to the nation. These men have, however, of late entertained other opinions. They now know that the farmers in Scotland are relieved from these hardships, and they feel themselves unhappy; not because their brethren on the north side of the Tweed are more favourably circumstanced in these respects, but because from the volumes of information which, through the medium of the Board of Agriculture, they have had access to peruse, they are satisfied many alterations and reforms are indispensably necessary to render them as comfortable now as they were before they acquired so much additional information. If, therefore, when the yeomanry and principal

* This idea perhaps is new, and it is to be hoped without foundation. It takes its rise from the circumstance of no public measure having been adopted by government, for the improvement of the country, since the establishment of that Board.

principal farmers in England are thus awakened to a sense of their interest, and of their importance in the scale of society, it shall unfortunately so happen that the executive government determines "to grant nothing," it would have been better for the country that the Board of Agriculture had never been established; as its establishment, connected with such circumstances, may lead to consequences of which no man can dare to say he is able to ascertain the result.

The private advantages, or those resulting to individuals from adopting new and better modes of husbandry, may be summed up in one sentence: They are, an increase in the quantity and quality of the crops, and in the value of live-stock, while by the use of more perfect implements the general expence of management is reduced, and the profits of course are rendered greatly more considerable.

The writer is aware that "the present state of husbandry in Great Britain," as detailed in the preceding pages, is by no means such as many of the inhabitants fondly imagined it to be. Some districts, it is true, are much better cultivated than others; but there is no county in the island where it is not practicable, by proper exertions, to increase to an immense degree the produce of the soil. No person, however, can reasonably expect, that, while matters remain on their present footing, the requisite exertions will
be

be made, except perhaps by a few spirited individuals. While the legislature continues to neglect the best interests of the country, and the proprietors to keep their tenants in a state of dependence, no general improvement can ever be effected. Let the legislature annul, or at least modify, those laws which press down the spirit of the farmer; let the proprietors grant leases on liberal terms and of moderate endurance, and establish judicious regulations in regard to modes of cropping and general management; and let them both, in their legislative and individual capacities, promote every measure calculated to disseminate useful knowledge respecting rural affairs; and the state of British husbandry twenty years hence will be greatly improved beyond what it is at present. Were these, and other measures tending to the same end, to be generally adopted, the inhabitants of this island might exclaim, in the words of the poet of the Seasons,

HEAVENS! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays.

Happy BRITANNIA! —————

————— Nature's better blessings pour
O'er ev'ry land, the naked nations clothe,
And be th' exhaustless gran'ry of a world.

That this picture may be realised, that the
corn-trade may be made once more to turn in
favour

favour of this country, and to a great extent, the writer most sincerely wishes; and that it is practicable to render these kingdoms an almost "exhaustless granary," not only to this but to other nations, has, it is presumed, been made abundantly evident to every reader who has perused these volumes with attention.

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